

AN
HUMBLE ATTEMPT
K
TO FORM A SYSTEM OF
CONJUGAL MORALITY:

BEING THE
SUBSTANCE OF SIX DISCOURSES
ADDRESSED TO YOUNG PERSONS OF BOTH SEXES,

WITH
A Design to lead them through the becoming DUTIES
of CELIBACY and MARRIAGE.

MANCHESTER: PRINTED BY C. WHEELER.

MDCCLXXXVII.

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A Dedicatory Preface to the Young

LADIES OF THE PRESENT AGE

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P R E F A C E.
It was dedicated from the history of Northampton, and the history of the country of Northampton.

THE Reader may expect some account of the Author—but what incidents worth communicating to the public, can be expected to diversify the life of a man possessed but of a small fortune and no interest; doomed to obscurity through life, and quiet oblivion when dead; unambitious of honours, wealth or fame? I will not insult the feelings of my readers by looking over my descendants, as Virgil makes Æneas; for with what varying passions must I behold the line of my progenitors passing in a review, and walking in the procession of a series of ages? Were the genealogy of every family preserved, there would probably be no man valued or despised on account of his birth. There is scarce a beggar in the streets, who would not find himself lineally descended from some great man; nor any of the highest title, who would not discover some base and indigent persons among his posterity. To my no small mortification, I see the line of my genealogy

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obscured,

obscured, and the favourite residence of my ancestors, which had been immemorially possessed by the family of the F-wc-TTs, sold through one false step in a matrimonial connexion. So much may be lost by the slightest deviation. This paternal inheritance descended to my brother through many succeeding generations: It was purchased from Sir Henry Widdrington, of Widdrington, in the county of Northumberland, and Sir Nicholas Tempest, of Stella, in the county of Durham, Knights, in the reign of King James the First. And as it had been so long in the family, it induced me to become a purchaser with all the inclination natural to return to the land of my fathers, where I drew my first breath, and received my earliest support and protection; where I passed my youth, and acquired my learning; and where the ashes of those who gave me being, and, what is more valuable, a virtuous education, are deposited; which rendered it, upon the grounds of humanity and gratitude, the proper object of my affection and esteem. This accident revived in my imagination the pleasing ideas of my native place, which I had left without any probability of returning, and therefore thought as seldom as I could of what I loved or esteemed in it, to avoid the desiderium which of all things maketh life most uneasy.

I felt more, I fancied, in being separated from those I loved, than I should have suffered
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in the thought of going away myself, into a state that can feel none of this sort of losses. But my father, resolving not to imitate the folly of his ancestors, who had hitherto left the younger sons incumbrances on the eldest, destined me to a profession. My mother felt the common struggles at the thought of parting; and when she dismissed me, pressed me to her bosom, with an embrace, that I still feel; gave me some precepts of piety, which, however neglected, I have not forgotten, and uttered prayers for my final happiness, of which I have not yet ceased to hope that they will at last be granted. There are few things besides this that give me the anxiety of a wish; the strongest I have had was to enjoy the full tranquillity of the rural scene; far from the noise of cities, and the hurry of the busy world; free from its anxieties, and ignorant of many of its vices; where the sirens of flattery are scarcely to be heard, where beauty sparkles without praise or envy, and wit is repeated only by the echo. I longed for that period, when fortune would allow me to prosecute my favourite scheme of retiring from the smoke of a dissipated town, to enjoy the purer air, and less tumultuous joys of the country; when I should be dismissed to more certain enjoyments, in a safer empire. I viewed it as a kind of heaven at a distance, a place of rest and happiness. It was this darling prospect, that made me often, when I laid my head to my pillow, break out into that ardent wish,

which my favourite Horace so beautifully expresses, *O rus! Quando ego te aspiciam*, &c. In the dream of the moment, I pictured out a figure for the gentle tenant of the redeemed mansion, whom I wished (and my heart swelled with delight while I did so) to have the luxury of visiting there. Being enthusiastically fond of sequestered life, and feeling the greatest predilection for my native country, I looked with the fondest partiality at the spot devoted to the pastimes of my innocence, and continued a sort of grateful tenderness for the very trees, whose shades had so often soothed me in the summer of my childhood. I cannot carry my Readers thither; but, that they may share some of my feelings, I will present them with a Poem, which, from its subject, and the manner in which it is written, cannot fail of touching the heart of every one who reads it.

Happy the man, who his whole time doth bound,
 Within th' enclosure of his little ground:
 Happy the man, whom the same humble place,
 (Th' hereditary cottage of his race)
 From his first rising infancy has known,
 And by degrees sees gently bending down,
 With natural propension to that earth,
 Which first preserved his life, and gave him birth.
 Him no false distant lights by fortune set,
 Cou'd ever into foolish wand'rings get.

He

He never dangers either saw or fear'd;
 The dreadful storms at sea he never hear'd;
 He never heard the shrill alarms of war,
 Or the worse noises of the Lawyer's bar:
 No change of counsels marks to him the year;
 The change of seasons is his Kalendar.
 The cold and heat, Winter and Summer shews;
 Autumn by fruits, and Spring by flowers he knows.
 He measures time by land-marks, and has found,
 For the whole day the dial of his ground.
 A neighbouring wood born with himself he sees,
 And loves his old cotemporary trees:
 His health and strength to a third age enjoys,
 And sees a long posterity of boys.
 About the spacious world let others roam;
 The voyage of life is longest made at home.

There is a certain period, when almost every man wishes to escape from the hurry and bustle of the world, and to taste the sweets of retirement and repose. But how few are there, who, when they have arrived at that period which they fixed for this retreat, meet with that enjoyment which they promised themselves? How many do we find, who are extremely uneasy at their own seats in the country, where all from the skies to the centre of the earth is their own? who find great inconveniences, and must learn, however unwillingly, to endure themselves, till fashion proclaims the liberty of returning to the seats of mirth and elegance? Few are able to
 bear

bear solitude, and though retirement is the ostensible object of the greater part, yet, when they are enabled by success to retire, they feel themselves unhappy.

To be able to procure its own entertainment, and to subsist upon its own stock, is not the prerogative of every mind. Peculiar powers and elegance of mind are necessary to enable us to draw all our resources from ourselves. There must be a spirit of philosophy, and a taste for learning, or else the fancied scenes of bliss will vanish like the colours of the rainbow. I promised myself much happiness in the cultivation of my estate, in ornamenting a rural seat, and in the company of a few friends. But no man can give to his own plantations the fragrance of the Indian groves; nor will he always find the simplicity of the country more amiable than the arts of the town. To comfort those who envy the amiable simplicity of a country life, I shall communicate the sensations I felt on my arrival at Sedbergh, in Yorkshire, the place of my nativity. I own that what first struck me was the total change of faces, of which I had scarce the least recollection. Very few were left whom I knew when a boy, and those so altered in their appearance, so much the shadows only of what they once were, as excited in me many serious reflexions. Of the friends whose compliments I expected,
some

some had long ago moved to distant provinces, others forgotten our former intimacy amidst care and distresses, and others swept away, and their place was filled by a new generation, with other views, and other competitions. Hardly a single house did I find inhabited by the same persons I left in it; but every where a new race, new manners, and new modes of living. In short, I found myself, in every sense of the word, a perfect stranger. Sedbergh still stands, but where are the Sedberghians? Owning the obligation and debt laying upon me to the noble seat of the muses there, the place of my education, I visited that renowned seminary of learning, and recollected with pious tenderness those lessons of wisdom and virtue, those wise counsels inculcated by the late worthy Dr. Bateman, which were then directing me to happiness, after the heart which felt them had ceased to beat, and the tongue that uttered them was silent in the tomb. The sight of a place, where I had not been for many years, revived in my thoughts the tender images of my childhood, which by a length of time had contracted a softness that rendered them inexpressibly agreeable. As it is usual with me to draw a secret unenvied pleasure from a thousand incidents overlooked by many persons, I threw myself into a short transport, forgetting my age, and fancying myself a school boy. This imagination was strongly favoured by the presence of so many young

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boys,

boys, in whose looks were legible the sprightly passions of that age, which raised in me a sort of sympathy. Warm blood thrilled thro' every vein; the fading memory of those enjoyments that once gave me pleasure, put on more lively colours; and a thousand gay amusements filled my mind. It was not without regret, that I was forsaken by this waking dream. The pencil of memory stops not with the representation of ourselves; it traces also the companions and friends of our early days, and marks the changes which they have undergone. It is a dizzy sort of recollection to think over the names of our old school-fellows, and to consider how very few of them the maze of accidents, and the sweep of time, have left within our reach. I have often imagined within myself, that if ever all of us could meet again, after so many varieties and changes, we should smile at our past designs, and meet, like the righteous in the millennium, quite in peace and joy. But fate hath dispersed them all over the world, and different circumstances, interests and pursuits, have always separated those whom friendship would join, and would never suffer them to live together, who, by their inclinations, ought never to part; so that to wish it is as vain, as it is to wish to see the millennium, and the kingdom of the just upon earth.

God

God hath taken care of this, to prevent any progress towards real happiness here, which would make life more desirable, and death too dreadful. I should be in danger of growing serious, were I to go on in describing the melancholy prospect I met with at the habitations, where I missed my old friends. I took several excursions into the country that I might indulge those reflections, which, though they affected me with melancholy, I did not wish to lose, and remembered having played in many places I passed through with companions, the echo of whose voices was still fresh in my memory, though they, alas! were now sleeping in the dust. Recalling to remembrance days long since passed, and the juvenile society of those who are now no more, is an awful operation of the human mind; and while it speaks loudly the truth of the apostle's observation, *that the fashion of this world passeth away*, imperceptibly led me to a train of thinking that is neither unpleasing nor unsuitable to the character of a rational being, who hath been taught and accustomed to consider himself as an immortal part of the creation.

Such an habitual disposition of mind consecrates every field and wood, and turns an ordinary walk into a morning or evening sacrifice. Roving in this agreeable manner, I was infinitely delighted with the melody of birds, the bleating of flocks, and the murmur of waters. Fountains,

tains, lakes and rivers, are as refreshing to the imagination as to the soil through which they pass; and I considered the melody of birds, and the bleating of flocks, as a kind of natural prayer to that being, who supplies the wants of his whole creation, and in the beautiful language of the Psalms, *feedeth the young ravens that call upon him*. Remote from all the noise and hurry of tumultuous life, I roved unattended and free, with no circumstance of grandeur, but the consciousness of a reasonable immortal being, and in the evening retired to Crofshall in Cautley, the old hereditary possession of my fathers, where the silence and solitude of the place very much favoured my meditations.

Struck with an uncommon tenderness, I entered the house, where my feet had formerly often worn the threshold of the door. As I proceeded, the dear images of those who tenderly cherished me in my infancy, presented themselves to my memory; and while I looked with heaviness around, the idea of the late owner came full into my mind, and the reflections I made in this conjuncture produced the following sermons, on subjects not often treated of either from the pulpit or the press.

The reason assigned for the unusualness of discourses of this kind, is the difficulty of managing them with that prudence, caution, and
modesty

modesty they require; and the ill use some debauchees are apt to make of the most prudent and chaste discourses. But surely the corruption and lewdness of the times will justify the preacher in sending these into the world, which, however mean in themselves, may be productive of some good, and be an useful lesson to young persons, never to court, where they have not serious thoughts of love; nor to marry, where there is not a rational probability of being happy.

SERMON

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SERMON

S E R M O N I.

GENESIS, xxxiv. 1.

*Dinah went out to see the daughters
of the land.*

THE sacred historian, in this chapter, takes notice of the unhappy affair of Dinah. Her father Jacob was now removing, by divine direction, with his numerous family and large possessions of flocks and herds, from the country and house of Laban his father in law, to his own father Isaac in Canaan. In one of the stages of this tedious journey, he took up his quarters for some time, in the neighbourhood of Shechem. During his stay there, his daughter Dinah entertained herself with a visit to such ladies of that country, as were suitable to her birth and rank in life. This ill judged visit gave a young Prince, whose name was Shechem, an opportunity

opportunity of seeing her, and of contracting too intimate a friendship with her. Notwithstanding Dinah was the daughter of Jacob, and consequently had shared the distinguishing advantages of a religious education, under a parent of such eminent piety; yet the gaiety and inexperience of her youth, in concurrence with her very unguarded situation, rendered her at once a powerful, though undefining tempter, and an easy prey to temptation.

Unhappy, unguarded woman! I need not acquaint you with the situation into which her imprudent visit brought her; but appeal to the world, whether visiting in general, has not a bad tendency, to give a loose turn to a young lady's imagination. And here, to be as candid as possible, I will not suppose her frequenting theatres and taverns, or those nocturnal assemblies, which exhibit examples of strength wasting in riot, and beauty withering in irregularity—I will not even suppose her entering the regions of dissipation—I will only imagine her going to places dedicated to innocent mirth and festivity. It is fit, on this occasion, that she should divest herself of whatever is likely to contradict the intention—that, for this purpose, she leaves her cares, her serious thoughts, and moral reflexions behind her; and comes forth from home, only with such dispositions, as suit the occasion. With this preparation of mind, which is as little

as can be supposed, since it amounts to no more than a desire to render herself agreeable, I will suppose her meeting her companions, with a heart let loose from grave restraints, and open to the expectations of receiving pleasure. In this disposition, thus wrought upon before hand, and already improved to this purpose, take notice how insensibly the spirits get above the pitch and first bounds which cooler hours would have marked. When the gay and smiling aspect of things begins to leave the passages to woman's heart thus thoughtlessly unguarded, prudence appears too cold a monitor; gravity is deemed severe; mirth and diversion are all in all. — The phantoms pass; the adventurer returns home; it is needless to say with what impressions. That moment look into her heart — look through all the recesses, those pure mansions, formed for the reception of innocence and virtue; behold those fair inhabitants now dispossessed, turned out of their sacred dwellings, to make room for the most eager desires. Her spirits are now upon the wing, and can the most cautious say, *Thus far shall my desires go, and no farther?* or will the coolest or most circumspect say, that her mind is not susceptible of warm impressions; that those scenes, with all their charms and temptations, are never able to excite a thought, or awaken an inclination, which virtue need blush at? I would here propose to the ladies, if they wish to pass life with as much

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innocence

innocence and tranquillity as they can, to avoid the company of agreeable men as much as possible. It is dangerous to entertain as a friend or visitant, one who is capable of gaining any eminent esteem or observation, though it be never so remote from pretensions as a lover. If a man's heart has not the abhorrence of any treacherous design, he may easily improve approbation into kindness, and kindness into passion. It is the permission of such intercourse, that makes a young woman come to the arms of her husband, after the disappointment of four or five passions, which she has successively had for different men, before she is prudentially given to him, for whom she has neither love nor friendship. I would also advise them to beware of men of greater fortunes than they can expect to address them upon honour. I would have young women who are orphans, or unguarded with powerful alliances, to consider with horror the insolence of wealth. Fortune does in a great measure denominate what is vice and virtue; or if it does not go so far, innocence is helpless, and oppression unpunished, without its assistance. For this reason it is, that I would strictly recommend to young females, not to dally with men, whose circumstances can support them against their falsehood, and have the fashion of a base interested world on their side; which instead of avenging the cause of an abused woman, will proclaim her dishonour.

While

While the person injured is shunned like pestilence, he who did the wrong sees no difference in the reception he meets with; nor is he the less welcome to the rest of the sex, who are still within the pale of honour and innocence. What makes this circumstance the more lamentable, is, that it frequently falls upon those who have the greatest merit and understanding. Gentleness of disposition, and taste of polite conversation I have often known snares towards vice in some; whilst fullness and disrelish of any thing that was agreeable, have been the only defences of virtue in others. Women of honour and genteel quality, cannot give a deeper wound to their reputation, than by being so much as seen in company with men who have lost theirs. I have often wished, that they who treat with equal attention and observance, the woman of virtue and the prostitute, and are often seen at places of public resort, in company with those misguided fair ones, who however much they may be objects of pity and compassion, have forfeited all title to respect and esteem—I say, I have often wished, that these men might meet with such a reception from the women of honour, as would effectually check this indecency. But I am sorry to add, that I have not discerned, in their looks or manner, those marks of disapprobation which such conduct calls for. It is ever with reluctance, that I am obliged to take notice of any little impropriety in the behaviour of the ladies;

ladies; but I am persuaded, that were they to think but a moment of the consequences, they would be sensible of the impropriety of this behaviour in particular.

Women, it must be owned, are in this age greatly their own enemies. It is a just complaint, that the men are less sensible of their beauty and accomplishments than they ought to be. But it must be remembered, that such is the nature of man, that he despises every good which is too obvious and plentiful. The women have confessedly laid aside reserve; the men have, by natural consequence, suspended their admiration. Ease and forwardness of address, and excessive familiarity, are established by the law of fashion, and neglect and contempt follow by the law of nature. You see every day to what a degree of shamelessness visiting has brought the generality of the nation; so that persons of that sex, whose proper ornament should be bashfulness and modesty, are grown bold and forward; offer themselves into company; and even invite those addresses which the severity of former times would have scorned to admit. Our sex has usurped a certain authority to exclude chastity out of the catalogue of masculine virtues, by which means females adventure all against those who have nothing to lose. Oh! ye mothers of this land, how can you expose so rashly those tender blossoms committed to your care? Have
you

you forgotten that every unkindly breath is ready to blast them? Are you ignorant how soon the whitest innocence may be sullied? That it is possible for the strictest principles to be corrupted? Is there nothing in you own minds, that whispers to you the frailty of your sex? Oh! ye daughters of Britain, who, like some fair but modest flowers, acquire day after day fresh beauty and growing sweetness, so as to fill every eye with pleasure, and every heart with admiration; while, like those same flowers, you appear unconscious of your opening charms, and only rejoice in the sun that cheers, and the hand that shelters you; my admiration of your virtues exceeds even the love inspired by your charms. Whether it be that your more retired way of life lays you less open to dangers, or that religion strikes in more with the natural goodness of your disposition, than with the other sex, I know not; yet, without a compliment, I think I may observe, that many of you not only live in a more uniform course of virtue, but with an infinitely greater regard to your honour, than we find in the generality of our sex; and I question not, but the valuable part of yours will pardon me, if I be solicitous for your possessing every quality that can render you agreeable companions in a relation, which, of all others, is the most intimate; should be the most endearing; and must be the happiest, or the worst.

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From a secret desire of contributing to the improvement of the most agreeable part of the creation, which to me appear an auditory above the vulgar rank, I shall endeavour to render the plain voice of truth acceptable amongst those, who are daily tempted by the syren song of flattery. The adulation with which you are so early and so generally entertained, you will not look for here. My character forbids me to flatter, and my principles are equally averse to it. While others, by corrupting or misleading you, whether with or without design, would lessen your influence, and obstruct your felicity, I would effectually contribute to both, by inculcating every thing that can make you at once more amiable, and more happy; which may perhaps be consulting your interests more truly, than the most passionate of your admirers.

I own my heart beats with the fond hope of making you worthy of husbands who will deserve you, and be sensible of your merit; and I wish it were in the power of the moralist to restore the rights of female innocence and beauty, and to relume the lamp of virtuous love, by prevailing on my fair readers to retrieve the modesty of their characters, and not to imitate the nakedness, but the innocence of their mother Eve. They ought to consider that all their beholders are not sufficiently qualified with age and philosophy to be indifferent spectators of
their

their allurements. The eyes of young men are curious and penetrating; their imaginations of a roving nature, and their passions under no discipline or restraint. I am in pain for a woman of rank, when I see her exposing herself to the regard of every impudent, staring fellow. How can she expect that her quality can defend her, when she gives such provocation? To relieve the innocent from those insults which there is no law to punish, and to prevent those saucy, familiar gazers, from employing their eyes in such a manner, as to divert yours from the best use you can make of them—that of looking up to heaven—let me advise you to make a covenant with them, lest they behold vanity. I have often lamented that we cannot close our ears with as much ease as we can our eyes. No woman of real virtue can appear pleased, much less join in any conversation offensive to delicacy: and I trust no gentleman of polished manners, would say any thing in the company of ladies, that would raise a blush on the cheek of modesty, or offend the chastest ear. It is much to be lamented that loose and immodest conduct should ever be countenanced by the British ladies, those arbiters of taste and elegance, who control even custom, and from whose decision there is no appeal: otherwise I would beg leave to admonish the fair delinquents, that it is not only extremely injurious to their health and vivacity, but also to their beauty and loveliness; and

and he that can point out any prescription, by which female beauty may be increased, or its decay retarded, is an useful monitor to those new flights of beauties which every season brings into the world; who have hitherto heard only of their own charms, and who expect to find integrity in every bosom, and veracity on every tongue.

The moralist hopes they will pardon him, if he advises those young innocent creatures, who have no knowledge and experience of the world, and whose safety he would chiefly consult in these speculations, to avoid, as much as possible, what religion calls temptations, and the world opportunities; to shun, like death, the very first approaches of those, who have a great share of the language which usually prevails upon the weaker part of the sex, and can with their tongues utter a passion with which their hearts are untouched; who smile, only to tempt; and tempt, in order to devour. Tell me, ye flattered fair ones, who listen to the smiling foes of female chastity, do ye not impeach your modesty too much, by trusting the opportunity of night, and the ill counsel of a desert place, with the rich worth of your virginity? To the manner in which you conduct yourselves, during this season of love, you frequently owe the happiness or misery of your future lives. The hours dedicated to pleasure, in this pleasing part
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of life, have often an unseen connexion with your serious concerns. The time of courtship seldom proves an interval of life the most remarkable either for prudence or piety: It has on many accounts been too often a fatal season, and we find it difficult to get over the enchanting ground, with the same purity of heart and life, we first entered upon it.

By entering into any company that tempts; engaging in any friendship that offers; or accepting almost any creature that happens to court them, it is but too well known what mischiefs a number of young gentlemen incur. A female that acts upon the same plan is lost. Permit me on this occasion, to remind you of poor Dinah. Secure as you may think yourselves, none of you, I suppose, have been trained more virtuously, than it is probable she was, under the eyes of a pious parent. But alas! the spirit of wandering seized her; *she went forth to see the daughters of the land*; she met with a betrayer, and lost her virtue. Allow no man to treat you with unbecoming freedoms, but converse with men even of the first rank, with that dignified modesty, which prevents the approaches of the most distant familiarity, and consequently prevents them from feeling themselves your superiors. You should reflect, that they who endeavour to intoxicate you with adulation, intend one day

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most effectually to humble you. For artful men have always a secret design to pay themselves in future for any present sacrifice. The smallest liberties you allow them, are but so many preludes to your future ruin. Would you parley with the destroyer? The woman that deliberates is lost. I know not how true may be the hypothesis, but I really think, that when a young lady attempts to argue and reason with the man she loves, we may, generally speaking, predict the event. All that a virtuous woman can pretend to, in such a delicate situation, is commonly only to recollect, that it is her duty to restrain the transports of her lover, and to suppress her own feelings. To do either is often beyond her power; and yet such is the partiality of mankind, that small allowances are made for the frailties of the weaker sex. The slightest deviation, in the conduct of a female, stamps an indelible stain on her character.

The world overlooks a thousand irregularities in our sex, which it never forgives in yours: for you, small allowances are made; to you, little or no pity, is shewn. But let me tell you, much kind advice, many tender expostulations are ready to flow from my pen on this occasion. I might dissuade you from going forth from a shelter into a storm; from flying from the arms which have cherished you from the first moment of your existence, to refuge with strangers. I
might

might shew you the danger of such an excursion, the inexperience of your age, and the hazards your life, your fortune, your virtue will run in a world where your tender sex are made a prey, and so many thousands are confederated to accomplish your ruin. I might tell you of the many snares and temptations, which you have to avoid or encounter at every step; the pleasures which will solicit you in every luxurious court; the little knowledge you can gain except that of evil. I might speak of the seductions of men, their arts, their eloquence: But I forbear, and recommend you to him, *who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*

May the guardian angels, to whose care heaven has entrusted you, guide you still forward in the paths of virtue; defend you from the insolence and wrongs of this undiscerning world: and, at length, when we must no more converse with such purity on earth, lead you gently hence, innocent and irreproachable, to a better place; where, by an easy transition from what you now are, you may shine forth as angels of light.

S E R M O N II.

II. SAMUEL, xiii. 15.

*The hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater
than the love wherewith he had loved her.*

THERE is no passion whatever, which exposes us to such delusion, as that of love. It is ushered into the heart by the most pleasing emotions. Kindness, complacency, delight, joy, tenderness, sincerity, rapture, and the most romantic effusions of the most elegant friendship are its companions. These march before it, and plead its admittance with persuasive eloquence, and introduce into the gentlest and best of hearts (for they only can receive it) the unsuspected and blushing guest.

Happy, could it preserve its first character, and remain in its primitive and native innocence!

cence! The mind is then in its best state; its generous affections are awakened, and all its feelings improved and refined by the amiable inhabitant. But this transient state is not formed for duration. A life of transport is not the lot of mortals. Let those, who, in the ardour of unreflecting youth, form such gay visions of splendid enjoyments, and everlasting passion, chastize their joys, lest, while they clasp, they kill them. It is a truth collected from long observation on human nature, that the pleasure of the chace consists in the pursuit, not the attainment; and that it is often better to expect than to enjoy. The charms of illusion cease, where those of enjoyment begin; and the shadow vanishes the moment the real object appears. Like that coy, delusive plant, the sensitive one, when it is touched, it immediately contracts its displayed leaves, into a form and dimensions disadvantageously differing from the former; which gives reason to suspect, that some transformation has happened on the wedding night, and that by a strange imposture, one has been courted, and another married. The power of a fine woman over the hearts of men, of men of the finest parts, is even beyond what she conceives; they are sensible of the pleasing illusion, but they cannot, nor do they wish to dissolve it. But if she is determined to dispel the
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the charm, it is certainly in her power, and she may soon reduce the angel to a very ordinary girl. The woman generally outlives the idol. I must therefore desire my fair readers to give a proper direction to their passion for being admired. If they would make themselves the objects of a reasonable and lasting admiration, this is not to be hoped for from beauty, dress or fashion; but from those inward ornaments, which are not to be defaced by time or sickness. We may be assured that sooner or later adoration will cease. The heart overburdened with agreeable sensations, extends itself to futurity; and while the heat of love continues, we flatter ourselves it will never cool. We take its violence for a symptom of its duration. But it is consumed by its own ardour. It glows in youth; it grows faint with decaying beauty, and is utterly extinguished by the frost of age. And where there are no virtuous and commendable qualities to blow it up, it rarely lights again, but from some accidental impulses, by no means to be depended on, which a contrariety of tempers, the fatality of sickness, or the frowns of fortune, may for ever prevent, as age most certainly will.

The ladies have not always reflected how much they degrade themselves, when they aspire to no higher merit, than to gratify the
passions

passions of their admirers. Infinitely more is requisite to afford those delights, which we naturally expect from their society, and to secure an attachment to their persons, when their first attractions are no more. The transports of a virtuous love are the least part of its happiness; the raptures of innocent passion are but like lightening to the day; they rather interrupt, than advance the pleasure of it. How happy then is that life to be, where the highest pleasures of sense, are but the lowest part of its felicity? Virtuous love is not only attended with the sweetest pleasures that this life affords, but is truly conducive to the improvement of human nature. Like the sun, in the spring, whose warmth calls forth the latent powers of vegetation, love excites and cherishes some of those amiable dispositions, which would otherwise have remained for ever in a concealed and torpid state. It often improves the understanding no less than the heart, and the transformation which Iphigenia is said to have produced in Cymon, is neither unnatural nor uncommon. There is a wide difference between the gentle, generous sentimental passion of love, when it is heightened and rendered permanent by esteem, and that gross, momentary, sensual passion, which we may properly enough term the fury of lust. If we seek only for sensual enjoyments, the brutes are our equals, nay, perhaps our superiors in that point. Or if we can make our desires of this

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fort subservient to our will and pleasure at all times, changing like the summer clouds, or the veering winds, we only play with a passion we cannot feel; and though we may be happy in the enjoyment of beauty, we cannot be said to be so in that of love; but are utter strangers to the decencies, honours, and delicacies that attend the passions in elegant minds. When fancy is sated, and finds all the promises it made itself false, where is the innocence which charmed us? The first hour we are alone, we find that the pleasures of a debauchee is only that of a destroyer. He blasts all the fruit he tastes, and where the brute has been devouring, there is nothing left worth the relish of the man. He who follows this kind of gratification, gives up much greater delight by pursuing it, than he can possibly enjoy from it.

As to the common women and the stews, there is no one but will allow this assertion at first sight; but if it will appear, that they, who deal with those of the sex who are less profligate, descend to greater basenesses than if they frequented brothels, it should methinks bring this iniquity under some discountenance. The rake who, without sense of character or decency, wallows and ranges in common houses, is guilty no farther than of prostituting himself, and exposing his health to diseases. But the man of gallantry cannot pursue his pleasures without treachery

treachery to some man he ought to love, and making despicable the woman he admires. He proves the irresistible cause of imbittering the lives of those he is most solicitous to serve and please. And will a man like this make a tender husband, an affectionate father, or a respectable friend? What opinion must we have of his honesty, whose understanding is employed in forming snares for innocence? Or of his heart, who can turn without emotion from the tears of deserted beauty? Is there no danger that he will be tempted by the power of long habit to continue in his old courses; or that the insatiable love of variety, which he has indulged so freely, will not, some time or other, lead him astray from the finest woman in the world? With all the charms of personal beauty, and the superior charms of delicacy and sense, a virtuous woman will be slighted and even despised by him, who glories in having blasted the budding blossoms of love in the pestilential air of a brothel, and who has sacrificed those first fine sensibilities, which return no more, to some infamous and impure prostitute.

So the rose of beauty and innocence is left to bloom and decay. If a man gives himself leave to think, he will not be so unreasonable as to expect, that debauchery and innocence can live in commerce together, or hope that flesh and blood is capable of so strict an alliance, as that a fine woman must go on to improve herself till

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she is as good and impassive as an angel, only to preserve a fidelity to a brute; nor can she ever prefer the shattered remains of his health, or of his heart (who has abandoned so many fond creatures to despair) to the pure inexhausted affections of a man, who has never corrupted his principles, or suffered his eyes or passions to barter away all that is valuable in his existence for their gratification. It is a low and degrading idea of that sex, which was created to refine the joys, and soften the cares of humanity, by the most agreeable participation, to consider them merely as the objects of sight. How much nobler is the contemplation of beauty heightened by virtue, and commanding our esteem and love, while it raises our admiration?

Virtue makes a beautiful woman appear more beautiful, and beauty makes a virtuous woman really more virtuous. But the happy concurrence of beauty and virtue is a character too celestial to be frequently met with. Yet I would hope, for the honour of the sex, that there are, and there certainly are women, not a few, whose virtue adds a new softness to their sex, and even beautifies their beauty. May their number be increased; and may heaven bestow upon them all the blessings their prudent and peaceful affections, innocence of manners, and goodness of heart deserve; and the most worthy

worthy and deserving partners, with which it ever rewarded the virtue of unfulfilled chastity!

To enter into a criminal commerce with a woman of merit, whom we find innocent, is, of all the follies of this life, the most fruitful of sorrow. A man must make his approaches to her with the benevolence and language of a good angel, in order to bring upon her pollution and shame, which is the work of a Demon. The fashion of the world, the warmth of youth, and the affluence of fortune, may encourage these ardencies, in which heat presents triumphs. But if he succeeds in his designs, he will find the sacrifice of beauty and innocence so long an obligation upon him, that his whole life will pass away in the worst condition imaginable, that of doubt and irresolution. He will ever be designing to leave her, and never do it; or else leave her for another, with a constant longing after her. He is a very unhappy man, who does not reserve the most pure and kind affections of his heart for the marriage bed. No condition is more hateful and despicable than his who has put himself in the power of a mistress, whom he has corrupted by making her subservient to his vices, and whose fidelity he therefore cannot enforce by any precepts of honesty and reason. It is seldom known that authority thus acquired, is possessed without insolence; or that the owner is not forced to

confess by his tameness and forbearance, that he has enslaved himself by a foolish passion; and his crime is equally punished, whatever part he takes of the choice to which he is reduced; and he is from that fatal hour, in which he sacrificed his dignity to his passions, in perpetual dread of insolence or defamation; of a controller at home, or an accuser abroad. He is condemned to purchase by perpetual bribes that secrecy which bribes never secured, and which, after a long course of submission, he will find violated in a fit of rage, or in a frolic of gaiety. To dread no eye, and to suspect no tongue, is the great prerogative of innocence: an exemption granted only to invariable virtue. But guilt has always its horrors and solitudes; and to make it yet more shameful and detestable, it is doomed often to stand in awe of those to whom nothing could give influence or weight but their power of betraying.

I seldom deplore him who by losing his mistress recovers himself, since I think she does but intentionally, not eventually, disoblige him; and makes his flames a better return, by restoring him to his own heart, than she could by exchanging hers for it. For he who makes a present of his heart to any mortal beauty, even by her welcoming it, and lodging it with her own, grows subject to have it wounded in her breast. Those misfortunes reach him, that
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would otherwise terminate in her: her afflictions torment him, while his own reprieve him; and the felicity of two persons becomes requisite to make one happy. It is much better to be free from misfortunes, than to be able to complain eloquently under them. I was once half persuaded, that to undertake the curing of a lover, was the next weakness to the being one; though it is with this view, that I (who have never known the infelicities of love, but by the sufferings of others) have looked into those inward languishings of a mind, infected with this softness; which have given birth to a phrase, that is made use of by all the melting tribe, from the highest to the lowest; I mean, that of *dying* for love. If we consider, that all their heavy complaints of wounds and deaths arise from some little affectations of coquetry, which are improved into charms by their own fond imaginations; the very laying before them the cause of their distemper, may be sufficient to effect the cure of it; at least may so far contribute to their freedom, as to give them the desire and the design of regaining it. And it were to be wished, that the fair sex owed their recovery more entirely to their reason, and less to their resentment. It is a remark, as I remember, of a modern writer, who is thought to have penetrated deeply into the nature of the passions, that the most extravagant love is nearest to the strongest hatred; and we find that those extravagantly sentimental lovers,

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who refine too much upon the passion of love, are seldom truly happy, but often extremely miserable. Where there is a mutual affection, the consent of friends, a reasonable prospect as to settlement, and the whole is conducted in a prudential manner, and in subordination to the will and fear of God, it is a blessing to be susceptible of the tender passions; but when these concomitants are wanting, what we call love, is the most tormenting passion in itself, and the most destructive in its consequences. How often may such headstrong votaries be said *to sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind?* Amnon loved Tamar—too fatally so, for his innocence and repose. In his transports he forgot himself. The fire of youth, fanned by the wings of beauty, proved too powerful an opponent to reason, chastity and discretion. But though he forfeited all pretensions to chastity, he was still tremblingly alive to all other relations; and continued still happy, though less worthy of felicity: he was soothed with her heavenly charms, and was both happier and better for those raptures of admiration. But it was the goodness of his lover he admired; and in proportion as his esteem for the beauties of her mind increased, his passion for her personal charms grew more violent; so that, as the one invited him to return to virtue, the other tempted and provoked him to persist in vice, and at last to engage with her in a scene of criminal

minal love. No sooner had she admitted his dishonourable embraces, than she found him not only rudely treating her, but basely deserting her to a censorious world; and what is still worse, to the inward sorrow and compunction of a troubled mind. Her yielding beauty, by granting his desires, lost his esteem. Man enjoys less what he obtains, than that which he hopes for; and to render such imaginary property still more flattering and agreeable, modifies it to his passions. The ideal form follows him every where. Now suppose him to discover, that the character he contemplates with transport is merely imaginary; need I speak the rest? The idol he worshipped, being demolished, he looks with surprize for the object on which he doated, not being able to discover it more. He is displeased with that which remains in its stead, and which his imagination disfigures as much as it embellished it before. Thus plucked from the soaring heights of his warm and irregular desires, he is vexed at and ashamed of himself first, and then hates the object of his affections; *bates her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he bates her, is greater than the love wherewith he loved her.* The charms he dreamt of are all the work of fancy, whose existence is in the clouds. She paints out the object of affection in all the romantic lights of an Arcadian princess, an angel form, and a heavenly mind; the pride of nature,

nature, and the joy of man; a source of immortal pleasures, raptures that will never satiate, bliss uninterrupted, and transports too big for expression. With all these ravishing scenes before his eyes, the lover sighs, languishes, dies for possession. No sooner has he enjoyed the object of his wishes, than he finds his imaginary goddess mere flesh and blood, the idol of his own intoxicated brain. In such cases of deception, let man exclaim against none but himself: It is his own doing, and he has nothing to blame but the heat and indiscretion of his own passions. I shall leave these Inamoratos to float in their fool's paradise, having made evident their unfitness for breathing the pure air of matrimonial felicity; but would advise them before they enter the suburbs of marriage, to expect no more happiness from wedlock than it is destined to afford; lest those too lively sensations should be succeeded by an irksome state of mind; lest their decline of passion, instead of stopping at indifference, should even reach absolute disgust; and those who are too passionately fond of each other as lovers, should come to hate each other when husband and wife. I cannot tell how it is, but I think I see in husbands, that this cause of their uneasiness is in themselves. They flatter their imaginations with higher hopes than human nature can gratify, and dress up an ideal charmer in all the radiance of perfection, and then

then enter the world to look for the same excellence in corporeal beauty.

There is this reason, why they should be more deceived in their connubial hopes, than many who enter into the same state—that they have allowed their minds to form unreasonable expectations, and vitiated their fancies in the soft hours of courtship, with visions of felicity which human power cannot bestow, and of perfection which human virtue cannot attain. That impartiality with which they ought to have endeavoured to inspect the manners of those whom they have known, was so much overpowered by their passions, that they could discover no faults or weaknesses in each other; and joined their hands without conviction, that, as there are advantages to be enjoyed in marriage, there are inconveniences likewise to be endured; and that, together with confederate intellects, and auxiliar virtues, they must find different opinions and opposite inclinations. The man, who brings his reason to support his passion, and beholds what he loves as liable to all the calamities of human life, both in body and mind; and even at the best what must bring upon him new cares and new relations; such a lover will form himself accordingly; will adapt his mind to the nature of his circumstances, and have proper affections ready for every incident in the marriage state. But he who takes a

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partner to his bed, with no other consideration than the expectation of scenes of dalliance, and thinks of her only as she is to administer to the gratification of his desire, finds the object of his affection falling in his esteem, as his desires flag; and he, without her fault, thinks her charms and her merit abated. Hence follow indifference, dislike, peevishness, and rage, because he did not before hand think of the creature he was enamoured of, as subject to dishumour, age, sickness, impatience or sullenness, but altogether considered her as the object of joy.

Human nature itself is often imputed to her as her particular imperfection and defect. But let every man look upon the woman, who chuses him to be under his protection in sickness and health, with the utmost gratitude, whether from that moment she is shining or defective in body or mind. Let him think himself bound to supply with good nature the failings of her who loves him, and always think her the object of love and pity, who comes to his arms the object of joy and admiration.

A man of this make will perform all those good natured offices that could have been expected from the most bleeding pity, without being so far affected at the common misfortunes of human life, as to disturb his own repose.

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His actions of this kind are so much more meritorious than another's, as they flow purely from a principle of virtue, and a sense of his duty; whereas a man of a softer temper, even while he is assisting another, may in some measure be said to be relieving himself. Nothing can be more weak than to place our happiness in the enjoyment of others, which renders it liable to be ruffled and discomposed by every accident, and lost under the most common misfortunes. There is nothing which renders either sex more despicable (the female especially) than thinking it essential to happiness to be married. Besides the gross indelicacy of the sentiment, it is a false one, as thousands of women have experienced. If a female thinks it essential to her happiness, the secret should be kept inviolable in her own bosom; nor ought she to discover the full extent of her love to him who marries her. If he has delicacy he will not ask it for her sake; if he has sense, not for his own.

A man endowed with that strength of mind I am here speaking of, though he leaves it to others to make him still more happy, does not put it their power to make him miserable. He confines his happiness within himself, and keeps it from being dependent on the world. His mind is sufficiently furnished with ideas to support

port solitude, and keep up an agreeable conversation with itself.

Learning is a very great help in this case, as it lays up an infinite number of notions in the memory, ready to be drawn out and set in order upon any occasion. The mind often takes the same pleasure in looking over these her treasures, and augmenting and disposing them into proper forms, as a prince does in a review of his army. A mind thus furnished feels a secret pleasure in the consciousness of its own perfection, and is delighted with such occasions as call upon it to try its force. A lively imagination, indeed, may produce a pleasure very little inferior in persons of much weaker minds. But as the first may not be improperly called the heaven of a wise man, the latter is extremely well represented by our vulgar expression, which terms it a fool's paradise. There is however this difference between them, that as the first naturally produces that strength and greatness of mind, which is so essentially necessary to render a man happy, the latter is ruffled and discomposed by disappointments, even in the midst of enjoyments, much more in the common infelicities of life.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N III.

PSALM lv. 12.

It was not an open enemy that hath done me this dishonour, for then I could have born it.

THERE are two things, which affect the heart of every ingenuous man most deeply; good natured and generous offices, from those to whom we have been injurious, and ill natured and unchristian treatment from those to whom we have been very kind and affectionate. As to the former, we can make a shift to bear their hatred, because we have deserved it; but it grieves us to find the least coldness and indifference in the latter, because we have made it our constant endeavour to please them. This behaviour of our companions (how does it grieve us, that we should once have occasion not to call them by that name?) gives the most exquisite sensations

sensations of distress. How much does it cost us to give up persons who have so long kept possession of our hearts? Crosses and disappointments in love are more hard to get over than any other. The passion itself so softens and subdues the heart, that it disables it from struggling or bearing up against the woes and distresses that befall it. The mind meets other misfortunes with her whole strength: she stands collected within herself, and sustains the shock with all the force that is natural to her. But a heart in love has its foundations sapped, and immediately sinks under the weight of accidents that are disagreeable to its favourite passion.

There are few of us, who have lived any time in the world, but must have lost some of our favourites; and though new ones may be adopted in their room, yet after having tasted the pleasures of old friendship, we seldom greatly relish the new; because we say and think the old were better—The reason of which probably is, that we insensibly join the pleasurable ideas of our younger years, with the ideas of those persons, with whom we then conversed. The remembrance of that season of delight associates itself with, and gives an agreeable relish to what was said and done then; and to those who said and did it. The years which then

then passed over our heads, leave permanent memorials behind them. Many gladfome scenes, which we have shared in that thoughtless age, afterwards press tenderly upon nature; scenes that present to us afresh those blissful illusions of life, when gaiety was upon the wing undamped by care, and hope smiled before us unchecked by disappointment. I cannot but regret those delightful visions of our childhood, which, like the fine colours we see when our eyes are shut, are vanished for ever.

Ye sweet and flattering illusions, ideas of so desirable a felicity! go, vanish like a dream; for such I will ever think you. The distance of those scenes adds to our idea of their felicity, and increases the tenderness of their recollection, by giving us back our joys without tumult, our griefs without poignancy, and producing equally from both a pensive pleasure, which men, who have retired from the world, or whom particular circumstances have somewhat estranged from it, will be particularly fond of indulging. Reflect then on those moments so fleeting, and so little enjoyed. You thought your sufferings great; but had you known it, you were happy. The cheapness of puerile delights, the guiltless joy they leave upon the mind, the blooming hopes that lift up the soul in the ascent of life, the pleasure that attends the gradual opening of
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the imagination and the dawn of reason, makes me think most men find that stage the most agreeable part of their journey.

Youth is the season when friendships are formed, which not only continue through succeeding life, but which glow to the last with a tenderness unknown to the connexions begun in cooler years. Friendship, love, benevolence, pity, and all the social passions, which figure in the generous warmth of youth, lose ground insensibly on the approach of age. How many, in early life, place their unchangeable esteem, as they think, on deserving amiable young persons, whom they hope to make the inseparable companions of their future hours? A similarity of passions, and a growing affection, endears and attaches them to each other; and thence arises a very endearing intimacy; a friendship founded upon the most solemn professions, and the most binding asseverations; a friendship ratified by repeated trials of constancy and honour, which confirms them in their first good opinion, and unites them by the strongest, even sacred obligations. Now who would not be apt to pronounce them of one mind and one soul, (I had almost said) one body?

If public acknowledgements signify any thing; if private assurances have any meaning; nay, if real instances of kindness can be admitted

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as proofs of a genuine regard: if, in short, honour, fidelity and constancy, and whatever else recommends itself to our esteem, under the winning characters of friendship, gratitude and love, have any force upon our judgement; we must think and own the prospect of persons thus circumstanced, to be extremely promising, or rather supremely happy. Yet, notwithstanding all this close connexion and profession of love, how often do men basely falsify their friendship, desert their friends, and betray their counsels? Have we not seen some fly, but wicked insinuation, like the worm at the root of Jonah's gourd, sap and destroy all those promising, those fair appearances? Have we not heard when the slightest whispers, some pretended ill usage, nay even the most groundless jealousies and suspicions, have been thought sufficient to disannul the most binding obligations, and dissolve, cruelly dissolve, what was seemingly inseparably, and ought to have been eternally connected? From such as under a pretence of amity design us injury, there is no sanctuary. The attacks of one who has an avowed enmity to us, we are generally upon our guard against; the insults too, and keen invectives of a professed adversary, are less cutting and terrible, because it is what we may expect to meet with: the one we may be secured from by flight or a cautious retreat; and the other cannot too deeply affect us,

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because we are prepared for the worst. But when an equal, one in the same circumstances with ourselves; a guide, whom we consult and advise with upon all occasions, betrays and misleads us; when a familiar companion, who knows our every concern, is privy to our secrets, and acquainted, intimately acquainted, with the nicest springs and movements of our souls; when such a one magnifies himself against us, or maliciously exposes our infirmities, it is barbarously cruel, highly ungrateful, more than human nature, without divine assistance, can bear, and, generally speaking, almost unpardonable. If this be a specimen of their love, what must be their hatred? If they thus behave to the persons, to whom they make daily professions of the warmest regard, how will they behave to those to whom they bear the greatest abhorrence? To injure those, who have never done us an injury, is inhuman; but to deceive them, who have given us the strongest assurances of their love, is the extent of baseness, perfidy and ingratitude. Inhumanity is caught from man—from smiling man. Who would imagine that a pleasing countenance could harbour villany, or that smiles could sit upon the face of mischief? His mercies are cruel, his courtesies smother wrongs. Such good offices as these, and such kindly thoughts and concerns for one-another, are what too often make up the amity, as they call it, between the two sexes. But can
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any thing be more cruel, or serve to sink a man so much below his own distinguishing characteristic, I mean reason, than returning evil for good, in so open a manner, as that of deceiving a young lady, who has had so good an opinion of him, as to believe what he said, relating to one of the greatest concerns of human life; by delivering her happiness in this world to his care and protection? Must he not be abandoned to all manner of humanity, who can deceive a woman with appearances of affection, for no other end, but to torment her with more ease and authority? Is any thing more unlike a gentleman, than when his honour is engaged for the performance of his promises, because nothing but that can oblige him to it, to become afterwards false to his word, and be alone the occasion of misery to one, whose happiness he but lately pretended was dearer to him than his own.

Marriage is of too serious a nature, to begin it with an action, that must give the person, with whom we are to live alone for life, but a mean opinion of our understanding and integrity, since it is contrary to reason, honour, and modesty; and as it is a breach of duty and affection, must give her but little hopes of the continuance of them to her; and neither can she have so good an opinion of any person, that can make such an offer, as to trust herself with

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him for life. He ought to be sorry to find she has so mean an opinion of him, as to think him capable of such an act; and much concerned, if he has given any reason for such an opinion. If he would taste the purity of a chaste love, let him never attempt to deprive her, with whom he hopes to share the unpolluted joys of marriage, of that for which he will love her more fervently, and behave to her with greater deference and esteem; which cherishes both desire and love in his heart, and by the help of which she knows, even in the embraces of the most tender union, how to keep him at a distance, and prevent his being cloyed with her. Let the impassioned bridegroom be the first happy man who looses the vestal zone.

I shall conclude this discourse with a moral which I have taught upon all occasions, and shall still continue to inculcate into my female readers—that nothing bestows so much beauty on a woman as modesty. This is a maxim laid down by Ovid himself, the greatest master in the art of love. He observes upon it, that Venus pleases most when she appears in a figure withdrawing herself from the eye of the beholder. The retiring graces have always been the most attractive. The greatest beauty in a female character is that retiring delicacy, which avoids the public eye, and is disconcerted even at the gaze of admiration; that decent and modest reserve, which,
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like the distance kept by royal personages, contributes to preserve her esteem and to gain admirers. She who ought to be the example of her sex was abashed at the sight of the angel Gabriel, in the form of a man. Women likewise ought to testify a bashfulness in the presence of men, though they appeared in the form of angels. Modesty gives the maid a greater beauty than even the bloom of youth: it bestows on the wife the dignity of a matron, and reinstates the widow in her virginity. But too much delicacy, in the female sex, often prevents them from marrying, and tasting in youth those pleasures which love and youth combined only can give. I would here caution the ladies against shewing those airs of disdain, those pretences of aversion to men, which we now and then discover in the female sex; who, when they find a man irrecoverably their slave, begin to use him as such; and after many steps towards such cruelty, at last, perhaps, utterly abandon him. If they would consider aright, they would find an agreeable change in dismissing the attendance of a slave, to receive the complaisance of a companion. I would not here be understood to discourage that natural modesty of the sex, which renders a retreat from the first approaches of a lover both fashionable and graceful. A virtuous woman should reject the first offer of marriage, as a good man does that of a bishopric; but I would advise neither the
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one, nor the other, to persist in refusing, what they secretly approve. Some value themselves upon their charms, till they cease; and drop into their graves, before they have done deliberating; not being in the least determined, whether they should be governed by the vain world, and the frequent examples they meet with; or hearken to the voice of their lovers, and the motives they find in their own hearts in favour of them. Leave those, who have no delight but that of increasing the number of their admirers, to their vanity; and rest assured, that love, whose laws they transgress, and whose empire they seek to usurp, will find means to punish them.

And here it must be confessed, that the rare appearance of virtuous love is, in a great measure, imputable to the increase of female prostitution. For where modesty ceases to be the ornament of one sex, and integrity of the other, they easily mistake a cloud for a Juno. Their hearts are too much debauched to be able to entertain a virtuous passion for a single object. Thus marriage is avoided. How many do we find, who would not resign their liberty, as they call it, for all the beauty and wealth the whole fair sex is possessed of? This humour among young men of condition is imitated by all the world below them, and a general dissolution of manners arises from this one sort of libertinism.

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It is from this one fountain that so many beautiful, helpless young women are sacrificed and given up to lewdness, shame, poverty, and disease. It is owing to this also that so many excellent young women, who might be partners of conjugal affection, and parents of a worthy race, pine under unhappy passions for such as have not attention enough to prefer them to common prostitutes.

If the fair sex would all cease to listen to licentious love, they would be courted with all the ardour and veneration of a pure and virtuous affection. For God and nature, and reason and virtue evidently designed them for nuptial felicity. But their whole dependence for the accomplishment of this great end of their existence, ought to rest on the power they possess of exciting a virtuous affection. Yet when we look about into the croud of mankind, we find that the fair sex reign with greater tyranny over lovers than over husbands, who cherish a base passion, which it is mean to indulge, but which it would be glorious to overcome; and which they might conquer with half the pains they are at in gratifying it. A soldier does not undergo more watchings and fatigues in a campaign, than those abandoned profligates, in the course of a vicious amour. As it is said of some men, that they make their business their pleasure, those sons of darkness may

may be said to make their pleasure their business. The destruction of a well educated young woman is not accomplished by the criminal, who is guilty of it, in a sudden start of desire; he is not surprized into it by frailty, but arrives at it by care, skill and meditation. It is no small aggravation of the guilt, that it is a thousand times conquered and resisted, even while it is prosecuted. He that waits for fairer occasions, for riper wishes, for the removal of a particular objection, or the conquest of any certain scruple, has it in his power to obey his conscience, which often calls him, during the intrigue, a villain and a destroyer.

Some think there is no great harm in corrupting and debauching the daughter of a poor person, whose family connexions make no great figure in the world. If it were a young lady of rank and fortune that was to be seduced, the affair would then be of a very serious nature. I grant that to seduce a person of family and fortune may be more destructive in its consequences to society, and good morals; because the example of such a one is more extensive in its influence: besides, it may expose the base violator of female modesty, to the fashionable mode of making satisfaction at the hazard of his life; all which he flatters himself are avoided in attempts upon persons of obscure characters. But give me leave to ask, Is not a poor person's daughter

daughter equally valuable in the eyes of an indulgent, though poor parent; and equally precious, in the impartial eyes of heaven?

When men of rank and figure pass their lives in criminal pursuits and practices, they ought to consider, that they render themselves more vile and despicable than any innocent man can be, whatever low station his fortune or birth have placed him in. Title and ancestry render an ill man contemptible. This consideration alone should deter a noble mind from a base and ungenerous act, from requiting her ill by whom he has been obliged. Was it for this that the exalted merits and godlike virtues of his ancestors were honoured with titles, that they might be panders to their posterity, and confer a privilege of dishonouring the innocent and defenceless? Eternal contumely attend the guilty title, which claims exemption from thought, and arrogates to its wearers the prerogative of brutes.

If you look into the Grecian history, you find in the beginning of it, of how great detriment inordinate lust has proved to ancient nations. The rape of a Spartan lady raised a commotion and general armament all over Greece, produced a ten years war, and laid the city of Troy in ashes. Something of this nature occurs in the records of old Rome. He

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who knows any thing of its original state, knows very well, that an injury done to a lady, by a son of their last king, occasioned one of the greatest revolutions that ever happened in that government; for it provoked the people to abjure monarchy, and to set up a common-wealth in the room of it. These are monuments of the tragical events of the abuses of female chastity, and many more might be added. Though the mischiefs arising from lewdness and incontinence of other denominations may not be found quite so flagrant; yet the disgrace, by this means contracted, spreads itself; and whole families, at the same time that they condemn the crime, feel some part of the shame due to it.

I have often wondered that these deflowerers of innocence, though dead to all the sentiments of virtue and honour, are not restrained by compassion and humanity, from thus wounding the heart of a tender parent, and staining the reputation of his deluded daughter with a dishonour that can never be wiped off; from bringing misfortunes upon her, which she cannot bear, and, at the same time, depriving her of the only thing which can comfort her, compassion for her misfortunes.

Let us reflect a moment on the situation of that woman, who has lost her virtue. To what shelter can she fly? only to the arms of her betrayer,

betrayer, which perhaps are now no longer open to receive her. And is this the return he makes her, for putting in his power her virtue and reputation? How quick must be the transition from deluded virtue, to shameless guilt; and from shameless guilt, to hopeless wretchedness? For when a woman despairs of recovering her ruined character; when she finds herself deserted by her dearest relatives, and despised by an un pitying world; how soon is she induced from the mere motive of acquiring a miserable pittance, to proceed in the paths of vice, and to become more wicked with less temptation? The fate of a female, in these circumstances, is truly affecting. Blooming in innocence and health, the pride of her family, the delight of every eye, she comes forward to the world an unsuspecting victim. View her in her next stage; her delicacy extinguished, her honour lost, her beauty tarnished, and her whole soul as gross and prostituted as her conduct. This is no fancied portrait; it is delineated from nature. We often behold the wrecks of beauty that has been blasted, and of innocence that has been betrayed. Providence allows those miserable beings to carry their effrontery so far, as to appear without shame in every public place, the monuments of male falsehood, as well as female infatuation.

Let the libertine look upon the melancholy
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object we have been describing, and behold her despoiled of the honour of her sex, and the peace of her mind; robbed at once of virgin innocence, a fair reputation, and possibly a healthy constitution; and then let him tell me, whether he does not feel himself affected by what he has been the wanton cause of? Does he know that emaciated form, which was once featured by the finest lines of cheerfulness and beauty, but is now furrowed by the depressed wrinkles of abjectness and grief? Does he recollect the indefatigable pains he has taken to bring about this change? and does he consider that all her anguish, and all her sufferings, are the unjustifiable entail of a licentious moment? In towns, where there are so many women of prostituted charms, I am very glad when I gain time of reflection from a youth of gay turn. It is a great step towards gaining upon the passions, that there is a delicacy in the choice of their object; and to turn the imaginations towards a bride, rather than a mistress, is getting a great way towards being in the interests of virtue, as it has, with all the same indulgencies of desire, the advantage of safety in honour and reputation.

I would advise young men (and it is chiefly to the young that I presume to suggest admonitions) to observe a prudent and chaste behaviour, in all their interviews, with those
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amiable objects of their affection, with whom they hope to share the unpolluted joys of marriage. For chastity, with its collateral attendants, truth, fidelity, and constancy, gives a man a property in the woman he loves, and consequently endears her to him above all things. But if she resigns her chastity before marriage, it must be dangerous to confide in her fidelity to the nuptial bed, in that it tends to ruin, at least greatly to impair that modesty, which is the grand support and defence of mutual happiness.

SERMON

S E R M O N IV.

GENESIS xxxix. 9.

*How can I do this great wickedness and sin
against God.*

IF we may form a judgement from the divorces and separations, which happen in the gay world, we must conclude that the present manners are highly unfavourable to conjugal felicity. For we have not upon record, in all the archives of Doctors-commons, or the other courts, so many divorces in all the preceding annals of this country, as in the last century. Yet in spite of the fashionable prevalence of the present age, we must confess that adultery deserves a severer sentence than our modernized bills of divorcement inflict. For however indifferently it may be looked upon by sensual and carnal men, it is innumrated amongst those vices, which, if not repented of, will certainly
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exclude from the kingdom of God; and for the short pleasures it affords here, doom us to eternal torments.

I shall therefore venture to recommend chastity, as the most proper qualification; and when I cast about all the instances which I have met with in all my reading, I find not one so generous, so honest, and so noble, as that of Joseph in holy writ. When his master had trusted him so unreservedly, that (to speak in the emphatical manner of scripture) *he knew not aught he had save the bread which he did eat*; he was so unhappy as to appear irresistibly beautiful to his mistress. But when this shameful woman proceeds to solicit him, how gallant is his answer! *My master, says he, wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*

The same argument, which a base mind would have made to itself for committing the evil, was to this brave man the greatest motive for forbearing it—that he could do it with impunity; as if he had said, Can I, with deliberation and reflection, be guilty of an act of the vilest treachery to a bountiful benefactor, while

while he continues to carefs the wretch that injures him? How can I fupport the ftings of his kindnefs to me? To him I owe the height of my fortune. It was his intereft that brought me into public trust and reputation. To requite him, fhall I violate the laws of humanity, and bring infamy on his family, by fecretly endeavouring to rival him in the affections of his wife, the object of all his virtuous joys, of which, from whom can he more properly expect the protection, than from me?

I fhall confider the ingratitude and breach of trust, with which this crime is accompanied; a guilt here aggravated by its bright reverse; a falfehood heightened by the warmth and fidelity of a bountiful mafter; fufficient, to fuch a grateful mind as Jofeph's, to prevent his doing any thing that might juftly difpleafe his mafter; much lefs could he bear the thought of turning thofe very favours to his difhonour, and injuring him in the moft fenfible manner, by thofe very advantages which he held under him.

It would have been the baselt and fouleft return to the confidence of a bountiful mafter, if Jofeph had requited fo much kindnefs with fuch ingratitude. But what is gratitude, the libertine may fay, when oppofed to paffion? She had beauty, and he was human. Senfible that he was not made for himfelf alone, and his
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mistress was a woman—and a kind woman—who, he found, would gratify his wishes with secrecy and safety, at a time when gratification was every thing.

His danger on this occasion was greater, as he resided within the precincts of a court. In courts too often vice is softened with new terms and polite appellations. Religion is called singularity; piety, preciseness or superstition; and honesty ill manners. On the contrary, craft is termed wisdom; knavery, policy; adultery is called intrigue, and guilt but mere gallantry. Such is the language of this free-thinking and freer practising age, which from the refinements of the closet comes forth to brave it in theatres and taverns. And if you ask those votaries of pleasure with what face they can assume such unbecoming liberties, they will answer you, that it is the mode, the gallantry, and the genteel freedom of the present age, which has redeemed itself from the pedantry and absurd scrupulosity of former times. But it is not the doctrine established in the polite circles that can sanctify vice.

Whatever a gay and giddy world may imagine, such an inestimable jewel as conscious virtue needs and deserves our continual watch. If it were allowable to transgress the rules of chastity, even where there is no violation

of the nuptial bed, what would be the consequence of such a revolt? Would it not make the world one wide scene of debauchery and brutality let loose? The very reverse of heaven in every point but one, that by discouraging an institution which every wise state has encouraged as necessary to its welfare, there would be seldom or never any such thing as marrying, or being given in marriage. The parents of what the seducer veils under the specious name of a fashionable gallantry, are deceit, perjury, lust; and infamy, ruin, murder, are its tragical offsprings.—Falsehood in love bears a blacker aspect than infidelity in friendship, or villany in business. The capital injury is the deceit, but there is moreover great ingratitude. The greater the obligations are which we have at any time laid on others, the better treatment we do of course expect in return; and with the greater degree of warmth, we do resent any injury or contempt from them. The slightest wound gives the most exquisite pain, when inflicted by the hand we love, and is warmly exclaimed against by the royal Prophet, *it was not an open enemy that hath done me this dishonour, for then I could have borne it.*

He is so admirable upon this topic, that it would be a kind of sacrilege to omit saying after him, *neither was it mine adversary that*
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did magnify himself against me; for then peradventure, I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend. The complaint breaks off abruptly, because the shame and resentment of such unlooked for and undeserved treatment is unutterable. Ingratitude is a vice inseparable from a lustful man. He is one of those brutal minds which can be gratified with the violation of innocence and beauty without the least pity, passion or love to that with which he is so much delighted. I will not presume to shock the feelings of my readers with a view of his chambers. Indeed the most abandoned libertine would blush at the particular representation of the disgusting scenes which there present themselves.

It is sufficient to observe, that his retirements are continually disgraced by every excessive indulgence of that passion, which has a more particular tendency to degrade the dignity of the human character even below the brute creation. It would therefore be worth serious consideration in both sexes, and the matter is of importance enough to them, to ask themselves whether they would change lightness of heart, indolence of mind, chearful meals, untroubled slumbers, and gentle dispositions, for a constant pruriency,

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which shuts out all things that are great or indifferent, clouds the imagination with insensibility, and prejudice to all manner of delight, but that which is common to all creatures that extend their species. Here love is no more than voluptuous emotions, waiting its natural periodical impulses, till at the approach of the *ne plus ultra* of transport, it vanishes away. How short, how very short is the duration of that pleasure, in which delicacy, and sentiment and esteem enter not!

After a few paroxysms of this paradisaical delirium, and a few hours enjoyed in ranging from charm to charm, in fluttering from flower to flower, apathy and frigid languor succeed, and the lately happy pair now without passion and without desire, sigh for repose, and are very happy to leave each other as soon as the laws of gallantry and politeness will permit. If every young lady, when she met with a gentleman of this cast, would but reflect for a moment upon the anxiety and perturbation of mind, that would follow the gratification of a transient desire, she would fly from the deluding syren, and glory in her retreat. It would alarm her to think, that he wanted to purchase the gratification of a moment, at the expense of her misery; and for such a transient satisfaction to himself, would

would entail on the woman he loved such various wretchedness.

This is his reward! Here is the transient heaven, to the attainment of which he has so long dedicated all his powers, changed in a moment to a perfect hell! When we bring the injury home to ourselves, the argument is still more irresistible. Where is the father, that can justify the seduction of his child; or the husband that can hear of his wife's infidelity, and not be sensible of the injury? I know you swell with indignation at the thought of it. The idea of defiling the marriage bed strikes us with horror. If I consider my own sex, what mischiefs do I discover in this incontinency? The loss of the wife's affection. Who can restore to her husband that affection, or make him a recompense for a heart that should have been devoted to him? Who can give him peace of mind or conjugal confidence? Who can cure him of his well grounded suspicions, or engage him to trust the feelings of nature when he embraces his child? How is this natural union destroyed or disturbed by the mixture of adulterate blood? With what trust does that woman deserve to be honoured, who has broken her most solemn engagements? Can we think her capable of friendship, who has injured her dearest friend in the tenderest part, and brought

brought pollution to her husband's bosom? What torture must he feel, who is attached to a beloved object, whose hand embraces, while her heart rejects him? To what purpose will all her affected endeavours serve, but to manifest her indifference the more? Can she impose upon the jealous eye of love by feigned caresses? Admitting however that she can deceive the partner of her bed, yet what falsehood, what imposture is requisite, to conceal a criminal commerce, to deceive her bosom friend, to corrupt servants, and impose upon the public! What a disgrace to the accomplices! What an example to children! What an insult to the God of order, who has made inviolably sacred the matrimonial band!

The qualifying these villanies with the specious name of *gallantry*, and speaking of them as indifferent amusements, is breaking through all the rules of decency and virtue, and trampling on the rights and laws of society. In every well regulated government, some punishment should be found adequate to the enormous offence of seduction. Strange as it may seem, the man who attempts my property, or robs me of a trifle, is turned over to judgement, and doomed to execution; but the man who encourages the crime, who patronizes villany, and recommends vice; this man is
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born with, is recommended, is applauded, is admired as a genius, as a friend to the rights and liberties of mankind. How much better is it to fall into the hands of a robber? We should then only lose our money; but this despoils us of our virtue, and robs us of our innocence, which as I have somewhere read is a sort of spiritual murder.

Joseph had undergone persecution, the terrors of death, and the misery of slavery: but greater difficulties still awaited him from the allurements of pleasure. His master's favour was indeed a blessing, but the kindness of his mistress was a curse; he had experienced his brother's malice and hatred, but this love was more cruel than both. The one threatened his life, but the other endangered his virtue; his brothers could but torment his body, but this attacked his soul. But he turned away with that contempt, with which we should never want spirit to treat the wretches, who can outgo the guilt of robbers without the temptation of their profit; and who lure the credulous and thoughtless to maintain the shew of their levees, and the mirth of their tables, at the expense of honour, happiness and life.

In the formation of connexions, of which so many have availed themselves, and risen to
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real and deserved grandeur, I would here wish young men to preserve a just reverence for themselves, and to despise all riches and all honours which must be pursued at the expense of truth, virtue, and a manly spirit. I have often with secret pity seen them lose minutes, hours, days and years, in a fruitless attendance on those, who had no inclination to befriend them. The honest opportunities of improving their condition passed without their notice; they neglected to cultivate their own barren soil, because they expected every moment to be placed in regions of spontaneous fertility, and were seldom raised from their delusion, but continued to dream of success, nor awoke to disappointment, till they found the favours which they had long been encouraged to hope, and had long endeavoured to deserve, bestowed on those who never dreamt of them, but were to be surprized into them, or perhaps solicited to receive them. In this case, I must beg leave to observe, that they who have dependants under them, whom they have been pleased to take under their protection, as such as were to share their friendship and favour; these, as well from the homage that is accepted from them, as the hopes which are given to them, are become a sort of creditors; and those debts, being debts of honour, ought, according to the accustomed maxim, to be first discharged.

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When I speak of dependants, I would not be understood to mean such as are worthless in themselves, or who without any call will press into the company of their superiors; nor when I speak of patrons do I mean those, who either have it not in their power, or have no obligation to assist their friends; but I speak of such leagues, where there is power and obligation on the one part, and merit and expectation on the other. In this case, he who receives another into his service with no thought of rewarding his merit, is as unjust in his dealings, as he who takes up goods of a tradesman without intention to pay him.

To see a fair beautiful young man, who had with great injustice been sold for a slave in his own country by his own nearest relations, and reduced to a state of servitude in a strange land; to see him, after a ten years service well and faithfully performed in a great family, for which they all owned themselves much the better, rewarded with a prison for withstanding a wicked temptation, and refusing to abuse his master in it; I say, to see such a fine youth, of such great virtue, such a grievous sufferer for it, must needs affect the hearts of all that behold him with a tender concern. But *the Lord was still with Joseph*, preserving and delivering him by his providence. God is the refuge of the virtuous and pious, and invites them amidst all

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their troubles to pour out their hearts before him. The neglect or scorn of the world exposes them not to any contempt in his sight. No obscurity conceals them from his notice; and though they are forgotten by every friend on earth, they are remembered by the God of heaven.

It would be unnatural and unwise to neglect interest, or despise advancement, when it can be procured consistently with the spirit and integrity of an honest and delicate mind. If preferment comes unlooked for, and unsought by servile compliance, it is an honour as well as an advantage, and is doubly welcome. But if you must sacrifice your reason, your honour and your freedom, in forming connexions and pursuing preferment, relinquish the chace, and eagerly retire to competency and contentment, passing the remainder of your lives in the cottage of independence, the daughter of fortitude, where you are taught by prudence and parsimony to support yourselves in dignity and quiet.

Let every fair beautiful young man, who, like Joseph, is reduced to a state of servitude, consider not danger, but duty, and endeavour not to have less virtue than he who rejected the embraces of the Egyptian Dame, who, to extricate himself, disappointed a yielding beauty,
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and dared the effects of her contempt and resentment, by acting contrary to the gallant maxims of the world. Her malice and falsehood naturally arose on the occasion, to destroy the supposed offender, and to prevent her future ruin. Circumstances were much in her favour. The great honour and possession that were given to Joseph of all his master's goods, might be supposed to have raised his spirits, and inspired his ambition to attempt the heart of his mistress, the only treasure not committed to his care. At least a tender husband, and one jealous of his honour, would naturally, for the sake of his peace and his fame, rather receive the report of his wife, than the calumny (as it might be called) of a slave. He would for his own sake believe her innocent, and him a traitor. His wife's impregnable virtue supposed, flattered his self love: whereas Joseph's testimony to her falsehood, had it been admitted, would have exposed him to the scoffs and reproaches of a censorious world. On the other hand, had he complied with her solicitations, he might have depended on her secrecy, and said with the adulterer in Ecclesiastes, *Who jeeth me?* The opportunities of privacy; the prospect of close concealment; his time of life, and plentiful condition; those warm affections, that strong sensibility, which the sequel of his story shews to have been natural to him; probably the blandishments of beauty; certainly

the repeated and pressing importunities of a fond woman, his mistress, and a person of distinction, who, if she had pleased, could easily procure his future advancement; the extreme danger manifestly attending his refusal; I mean, all the mischiefs to be dreaded from the resentment of a proud, but fond female, resisted, disappointed, enraged; and finally all these mischiefs falling at one blow upon a dependent and a stranger. From all these, Joseph could not but foresee the storm which threatened him—What then was it that enabled our amiable young hero to conquer? These two principles; gratitude to his master and obedience to God. Adultery (according to Joseph's sentiments of the violation of the conjugal union) is a great wickedness. *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God.*

This celebrated youth was guarded against this temptation by the power of these principles; and the same considerations by which Joseph put off the temptation, might be equally applied to the case of his mistress herself. She was the wife of Potiphar, and being supported by him in a way suitable to his quality, and made partaker of his fortune and enjoyments, she owed him a debt of gratitude. Gratitude therefore ought to have restrained her from descending from her dignity, and departing from her innocence. But if gratitude to her husband

husband had no weight with her, her vows, her husband's merit, her family, her fame forbid the indulgence of a passion so much below her. She sought the bed of a slave, and was refused. She made overtures to her bond servant without hopes of any return of her passion, or concealment of her guilt: she must view herself in the most abject light: a criminal without the false pleasure of a crime; liable to discovery, and exposed to infamy for no actual commission; below her very slave; reproached by his virtue, and depending on his mercy. Behold a prisoner at liberty, and his mistress in bonds. Hear him alledging, in the most modest manner, gratitude to his master, and obedience to the divine will; as if he had said, The connexion subsisting between your husband and myself is of a nature too strong for me to think of injuring him, in a point where the happiness of his life is so materially concerned. You cannot be insensible of his goodness or of my obligations; and suffer me to observe, that were I capable of such an action, at a time that my behaviour might be rewarded by your passion, I must be despised by your reason; and though I might be esteemed as a lover, I must be hated as a man. You may have passions, but give me leave to tell you, that you have understanding too: you have a heart susceptible of the tenderest impressions, but a soul (if you would chuse to wake it) above the unwarrantable indulgence

indulgence of them : and let me entreat you, for your own sake, that no giddy impulse of an ill placed inclination may ever induce you to entertain a thought prejudicial to your honour, and repugnant to your virtue ; which will never bear the reflection of reason, and which is against all the ties of gratitude ; a crime forbidden by heaven and earth ; a bliss prohibited by all laws human and divine.

This instance of Joseph's virtue deserves our especial notice, and so much the more, because examples of this kind are very rare. I wish I could point out more instances, in the present generation, of young men thus defeating the lewd and perfidious desires of those unhappy frail ones, who are as deeply sensible of their servant's beauty and comeliness, as their masters are of their prudence and integrity. I would recommend it to the male youth of this kingdom, to be as innocent and bashful as the Hebrew stranger, whom the Egyptian matron wanted to allure. Let him, who aspires to the noble title of adulterer, and (like the malignant fiend, envious of the paradise of conjugal felicity) with base cunning entices the lovely Eve to her ruin, ask himself this important question, *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*

The regard we owe to the supreme Being ever forbids us to gratify such unlawful requests;
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the voice of God and nature speaks plainly against such practices. Let others talk of a blind being that disposes of their hearts, but do you condemn their low images of love, and entertain no thought that relates to the marriage state, in which you cannot with confidence beseech the all seeing power to bless you. Consider every thing as a matter of consequence that has the least tendency towards keeping up, or abating the affection of one who has chosen you for life. Esteem him a fit object to employ your ingenuity in pleasing, because he is to be pleased for life. Lower your beauty to all but your husband, and never spread your charms but to gladden him who has a right to them, and all of you faithfully observe the obligations of the nuptial vow; so will fewer applications be made to the legislature for the dissolution of that sacred band.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N V.

ROMANS xii. 9.

Let love be without dissimulation.

LOVE is the most beautiful, and the most amiable of all objects of contemplation. It is something more than a pleasing embellishment. It is not the graceful motion of the hand, or the benignant glance of the eye, that is sufficient to attract our notice, and ensure our esteem. They who attempt the softer arts of pleasure, and endeavour to learn the graceful bow, and the familiar embrace; the insinuating accent, and the general smile; lose the respect due to the Christian character. The doctrine of the gospel is superior to every other system of morality in the world. The grand essential duties of life are therein all repeatedly enforced; the principles of decorum are finely exhibited, and even the little elegances of demeanor, which constitute

constitute the beauty of polished society, are not forgotten. The apostle, designing to lay down some considerable rules and directions, by which all the professors of Christianity in general ought cautiously to regulate their lives and conversations, places this exhortation in the front of all the rest, as being of all others the most useful and material, *Let love be without dissimulation.*

The doctrine of the world is, I know, of a very different complexion—Adulation to those we despise; courtesy to those we hate; connexions without friendship; professions without meaning; good manners without morals; appearances saved, and realities sacrificed; and, indeed, considering how ill-affected men are frequently to one another, they would be insupportable to each other, without a portion of that dissimulation, which is a considerable ingredient in the politeness of the fashionable world. If they were to shew, without disguise, that envy or contempt, aversion or malice, which, alas! they too frequently have in their hearts, they could not possibly bear with one another. In this view of human nature, some degree of dissimulation may appear necessary. But tho' this artificial love may have its use, in the present depraved state of men, yet true and undissembled love is far more desirable.

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If we had our choice, in the manner of making ourselves happy, we could not fix upon any thing more effectual, than to have our hearts overflowing with the warmest affection to every human creature, without the least tincture of any malevolent or disquieting passions. For love is the temper, nay, the very essence of happiness. Every sentiment of the human breast, so far as it partakes of benignity, is happiness, and so far as it partakes of malignity, is misery. Where true Christianity is, there is lasting, everlasting love. It whispers in the breast, what the angels sung in harmonious strains, *Peace on earth, and good will towards men.*

It is not my design to suppress love. The soul may sooner leave off to subsist, than to love; and, like the vine, it withers and dies, if it has nothing to embrace. But we should be extremely careful of the dedication of a passion, which, as it is placed, must either dignify our nature, or degrade it. It were injurious to address, to any object lower than God, the highest intensity of our love; or to make him the refuge of a defeated passion, whose transcendence entitles him to more than the most elevated and entire one. I wish to withdraw love from unsatisfying objects, that it may soar to the sublimest; and, in that eclipsing company, manifest its inclination to the divine being, as the needle to the pole; its passion for which,

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which, both its wavering and its rest bear equal witness to. The felicity of this friendship is the greatest belonging to our nature. False friends will forsake us, and true friends may either leave us thro' necessary avocations, or they may be divided from us by death. False friends will stand afar off, in the day of trouble; and even true friends, in some cases, stand only looking upon our misery; afflicted indeed in our affliction, but without any power to ease our calamities. But God is a present friend, infinitely powerful and good in all cases. He is able to hear us, wherever dispersed; and to relieve us, however distressed. Our communion and intercourse with our dearest friends, and nearest relations, may be intercepted by our misfortunes; but our intercourse with the nearest and dearest object of all, *in whom we live, move, and have our being*, cannot be intercepted but by our vices.

Too many of the friendships of youth are mere combinations in pleasure, formed upon a partnership in vice, or animal gratifications. Give friends like these warning of thy resolution to drop their acquaintance, as speedily as possible. Inform them that thou hast shut thy gates, locked thy cellar, turned off thy cook, disposed of thy dogs, forgotten thine acquaintance, and art resolved henceforward, let people say of thee what they will, to be no *one's friend but thine own*. Yet, if thou hast a virtuous friend, love
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him at all times; make him the friend of thy heart; delight in his conversation; place confidence in his integrity, and secure his affection by all the good offices in thy power. If he meets with misfortunes and losses, and is reduced to circumstances of great perplexity and want, visit him with the same freedom, and converse with him with the same confidence and affection as in the days of his prosperity. Convince him that thou art none of those summer friends, who, like numberless little insects, crowd the warm breeze, but disappear at the rising of the storm; who hum and buzz about him in the sunshine of prosperity, but when the winter of adversity approaches, wing their way to a warmer sun. True love never forgets its object. Delicate unremitting attentions endear each to the other, while an amiable partiality overlooks and compassionates each little foible, and softens into amiableness each little fault. Here imagination creates new beauties, and esteem lends new charms to love, and forms a silken band, which even time itself cannot dissolve; the strength of which increases as we advance in age. Is it that we grow more tender, as the moment of our separation approaches? or is it, that they, who are to live together in another state, begin to feel more strongly that divine sympathy which is to be the great band of their future society? There is not a thought that soothes my mind like this. I encourage my imagination to pursue it. The prospect of it
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opens the sublimest views to the human mind, and awakens in the heart the most pleasing and tender sentiment, which, perhaps, can fill it in this mortal state. Renew the memory of the most affectionate friends, with whom you were ever blessed in any period of your life; divest them of all those infirmities which adhere to the human character; recal the most pleasing and tender moments, which you ever enjoyed in their society; and the remembrance of these sensations may assist you in conceiving that felicity, which is to be possessed by those, who are re-united in happier regions, to those whom they loved and honoured here.

That man may make a happy friendship with man, is hourly evident; and that such a friendship may continue inviolable, is possible; but it is only with woman, that he is formed for carrying this amiable association to its utmost height. Nature forms the union between consenting hearts, and human polity (conscious of the frailties even of the best of the individuals, whom it connects and regulates) adds a tie to make that union lasting and indissoluble; a tie as sacred as friendship, as pleasurable as love, and as joyful as religion.

I am sure it is not to exalt the commerce with an ingenious companion too high, to say that every new accident or object which comes into a loving husband's way, gives his wife new pleasures

pleasures and satisfactions; and in the conversation of a tender wife every thing is interesting, and receives those delicate touches which she alone is capable of giving. Such a companion opens and expands our understandings, divests us of rusticity, and teaches a certain elegant ease that can never be acquired in the college, or the closet. For true love, wherever it prevails, adds a nameless grace to every action, gives a meaning to every trifling gesture, and renders the whole deportment pleasing and attractive; and the prospect of maintaining love and affection, when undissembled, is as secure as our own minds and dispositions may be lasting. No delusion is the foundation of our mutual liking. The sentiment which unites us, is not the blind transport of a passionate desire, but the most perfect and harmonious amity. This affection, designed by our bountiful Creator to soften humanity, and sweeten every human enjoyment, when it exists in a married state, is as refined an enjoyment of life, to its latest period, as any on this side Heaven. It concentrates every human felicity, gratifies every rational wish, is the grand cordial of life, and that heavenly balm, which cherishes hope, allays distrust, mitigates pain, and softens every misery to which humanity is subject. But domestic happiness, however pleasing in description, like many a poetic dream, is but an alluring picture. It must be owned there is much domestic misery.

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We have now looked on the pleasing side of the tapestry, and seen marriage in the most favourable light. Let us turn the canvas, and view it in its defects. There is something unnatural in painting, which a skilful eye may easily discover from native beauty and complexion. Colours artfully spread upon canvas may entertain the eye, but not affect the heart; and she, who takes no care to add to the natural graces, any excelling qualities, may be allowed still to amuse as a picture, but not to triumph as a beauty. The lustre of her mind, shining in her shape or features, gives her the power of charming. The emanations of a kind and benign heart, in looks, in voice, in words, in attitude, in gestures, are pleasing to the view of every observer. It would be a great improvement, or rather a recovery of what we call good breeding, if that politeness, which is in so high estimation among the fashionable part of mankind, flowed from real affection.

The real character is the only one that can be maintained at all times, and in all dispositions. Our faults and defects, concealed in courtship, will be displayed in marriage, and as hypocrisy, in the minutest matters amongst friends, is extremely odious; these defects may carry a sting with them, to which, perhaps, we shall never be reconciled. Most men, in the time of courtship, and in the first entrance of marriage, put on a behaviour, which is to last
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no longer than until they are settled in the possession of their mistresses; and the most abject flatterers often degenerate afterwards into the greatest tyrants. It will, therefore, be necessary to question those, who come to us with matrimonial complaints, concerning their behaviour in the time of courtship, and inform them, that they are neither to wonder nor repine, when a contract begun in fraud, has ended in disappointment. If their whole endeavour was to hinder themselves from being known, and to disguise their natural temper, and real desires, in an hypocritical imitation, studied compliance, and continued affectation; this shews, with too much evidence, by what avenues those evils have made their way into the married state. I have found, by long experience, that a man will sometimes rage at his wife, when in reality his mistress has offended him; and a lady complain of the cruelty of her husband, when she hears no longer the flattery of the lover; nor when the husband hastens to the tavern, and the lady retires to her closet, am I always confident that they are driven by their miseries; since I have sometimes reason to believe, that they purpose not so much to sooth their sorrows, as to animate their fury. Or when I see the avaricious and crafty taking companions to their tables and their beds, without any inquiry, but after farms and money; or the giddy and thoughtless uniting themselves for life to those whom they have only seen by the

the light of tapers at a ball; when parents make articles for their children, without inquiring after their consent; when some marry for heirs to disappoint their brothers; and others throw themselves into the arms of those whom they do not love, because they have found themselves rejected where they were most solicitous to please; when some marry because their servants cheat them; some, because they squander their own money; some, because their houses are pestered with company; some, because they will live like other people; and some, because they are sick of themselves.

I am not so much inclined to wonder that marriage is sometimes unhappy, as that it appears so little loaded with calamity. The marriage state, to use the words of a celebrated writer, is always an insipid, a vexatious, or a happy condition.

The first is, when two people of no genius or taste for themselves meet together, upon such a settlement as has been thought reasonable by parents and conveyancers, upon an exact valuation of the possessions or fortunes of both parties. In this case, the young lady's person is no more regarded than the house and improvements in purchase of an estate; but she goes with her fortune, rather than her fortune with her. These make up the croud or vulgar
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of the rich, and fill up the lumber of human race, without beneficence towards those below them, or respect towards those above them; and lead a despicable, independant, useless life, without sense of the laws of kindness, good nature, mutual good offices, and the elegant satisfactions which flow from reason and virtue.

The vexatious life arises from a conjunction of two people of quick taste and resentment, joined together for reasons well known to their friends, in which special care is taken to avoid (what they think the chief of evils) poverty, and ensure to them riches, with every other evil besides. These good people live in a constant constraint before company, and too great familiarity alone; when they are within observation, they fret at each other's carriage and behaviour. When alone, they revile each other's person and conduct: in company, they are in a purgatory; only when together in a hell; a lesser hell in passage to the greater. Be it your care to reverse this sad idea, and render the marriage state a lesser heaven, in passage to the greater.

The happy marriage, is when two persons meet and voluntarily make choice of each other, without principally regarding or neglecting the circumstances of fortune. It is fit indeed that each party should discuss the nuptial preliminaries,

preliminaries, to know what they have to expect on this head, and consider seriously with themselves, whether it will be sufficient so far to answer their desires as to prevent future murmurings and anxieties, and prudently allow them to enjoy life as they intend. A marriage of love is pleasant; a marriage of interest easy; and a marriage where both meet, happy. But they who marry fortune or title, what can they expect from an alliance, in which their hearts were never consulted? Where a young man has himself a sufficient fortune, he should not always look for an equivalent of that kind in the object of his love. If he weighs the attendance and behaviour of one, who comes to him in partnership of his fortune, and expects an equivalent with that of her who enters his house as honoured and obliged by that permission; whatever gratifications he may promise himself in the latter case from an agreeable person, whatever compliances from an easy temper, whatever consolations from a sincere friendship, he may expect as due to his generosity. The former is in all things to have a regard to the fortune which she brought him; the latter to the fortune to which he introduced her. His commerce with the former will eternally have the air of a bargain; with the latter of a friendship. Joy will ever enter the room with him, and kind wishes attend her benefactor when he leaves it. The former will think herself ill used

in his absence, and contrive at home an expense proportioned to the appearance he makes in the world; the latter thinks it her duty to increase, or at least not to waste his substance. In the former case, he will live in a constant comparison of benefits, and never know the happiness of conferring or receiving any; in the latter, he may promise himself all the obedience and tenderness with which gratitude can inspire a virtuous woman.

Who can find a virtuous woman (says Solomon) *for her price is above rubies?* The important object of his inquiries are, whether she possesses those qualifications which naturally form the amiable wife, and the exemplary mother.

I would not be understood, however, that beauty and fortune are of no estimation. Certainly no prudent man ought to engage in a married state, without a sufficiency on the one side or the other. But a figure agreeable and engaging, which inspires affection without the ebriety of love, is a much safer choice than a professed beauty. Ask any of the husbands of your great beauties, who are encumbered with their charms in all they do or say, and they will tell you, that good nature will always supply the place of beauty, but beauty cannot long supply the place of good nature. If you marry a woman remarkably beautiful, you must have a
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violent passion for her, or you have not a proper taste for her charms. But beauty is a dangerous property, tending to corrupt the mind of the wife, though it soon loses its influence over the husband. I might here point out some advantages attending the want of beauty in women; a want which will always be considered by them as a misfortune. But all misfortunes admit of consolation; and many of them, under a judicious conduct, may be metamorphosed into blessings. While, however, I consider the advantages attending the want of personal charms, I must not be understood to undervalue beauty. If we admire the lifeless works of art, much more should we be delighted with the assemblage of living features, in which are united symmetry and expression. It is nature's command, that we should be charmed with her productions, both animate and inanimate; and our hearts are most willingly obedient, when she bids us admire beauty in our own species. Taste, fancy, and affection, are, then, all at once most powerfully assaulted, and it would be as unnatural, as it is vain, to resist, by refusing our admiration. But the most attractive beauty of the person results from the graces of the mind. Delicacy, sweetness, understanding, and sensibility, shining in the eyes, will compensate an irregularity of features, and will sooner excite love in a feeling heart, than the best formed face, and the finest complexional hue

hue without expression. Without this irradiating power, the proudest fair one ought to know, whatever her glass may tell her to the contrary, that her most perfect features are uninformed and dead. But with it, we shall find, what experience has indeed proved, that plain women are often entitled to the utmost esteem. Goodness not only raises, but continues love, even to them who have no pretensions to beauty; and all the pleasing passions of the soul rise in proportion to their goodness, and soften their very imperfections into beauties.

The passion of love to a mistress when it is most sincere, resembles too much the flame of a fever; that to a wife is like the vital heat. It enters into the very constitution, and the kindness flows as easily and silently as the blood in the veins. A parity of temper is one of the principal requisites in matrimonial happiness; and yet it is possible that too great a similarity of disposition may, in some cases, render both parties wretched. For instance; if two persons of a gay and careless turn of mind, should happen to be united, both will think themselves entitled to pursue their joint or separate amusements, without being encumbered with any attention to domestic œconomy, till even the necessary means for their support may be irretrievably lavished away. Again; should

Should two persons of a saturnine complexion be joined in the indissoluble band of marriage, the natural gloominess of their dispositions will be encreased by each others converse; melancholy will become habitual, and care be heightened to despondency. From these examples, it is obvious, that a similitude of dispositions alone, though a strong incentive to affection, will not always ensure matrimonial felicity. And yet I am perfectly convinced, that where there is any material difference of sentiments or manners, there never was, nor will be a happy marriage.

The companion of an evening, and a companion for life, require very different qualifications. There may be a total diversity of ideas, which admits no participation of the same delight; and there may likewise be such a conformity of notions, as leaves not any thing to add to the decisions of the other. With such contrariety there can be no peace; with such similarity, there can be no pleasure. Our reasonings, though often formed upon different views, terminate generally in the same conclusion. Our thoughts, like rivulets issuing from different springs, are each impregnated in its course, with various mixtures, and tinged by infusions unknown to the other; yet at last easily unite into one stream, and purify themselves by the gentle effervescence of contrary qualities.

qualities. Where we esteem, and know we are esteemed, we are easily won, and prone to submission; especially where we have a good opinion, and a sort of reverence for the understanding and good sense of the person, who calmly and kindly reasons with us; and who, we are convinced, makes our welfare his supreme and ruling concern. When such a one is called to the delicate and difficult office of admonishing and reproving us for our follies or vices, the workings of real affection, appearing to our full conviction, reconcile our minds to the reprover, and give real energy and efficacy to what he says. The power of love, in such cases, far surpasses the power of the finest eloquence. Love without dissimulation conquers every heart. Let us appear outwardly what we really are within, in our native characters undisguised and unaffected. Dare to be what you are. If you do not gain esteem and friendship, you will have the consolation to think that there is not a requisite harmony in your minds and tempers for a mutual affection.

Without a certain congeniality of sentiment, independent of the adventitious circumstances of beauty, rank, or fortune, the connubial state is the very opposite of a heaven. Let parents, then, who are so fond of seeing their children married up to their rank, and chuse rather to behold them splendidly miserable than obscurely

obscurely happy, consider that intrinsic qualities in one man may very probably purchase every thing that is adventitious in another; in plainer terms, that he whom they take for his personal perfections, may sooner arrive at the gifts of fortune, than he, whom they take for the sake of his fortune, can attain to personal perfections. Therefore, to make a sure purchase, let them employ fortune upon certainties, but not sacrifice certainties to fortune; to the most ample equivalent in money, with the reverse of these qualities, unless they chuse to see their children miserable in great wealth, rather than the happiest of the race of mankind in a less conspicuous state of life. What weakness of mind does it betray to forfeit the matchless joys of virtuous love, for the ideal pleasures of affluence, and to be voluntarily wretched, provided we are richly so.

What melancholy histories have been recorded, where blooming loveliness has been sacrificed at the shrine of avarice, and manly virtue united to fortune and to misery? I could name crouds, who have led miserable lives, for want of knowledge in their parents of this maxim, that good sense and good nature always go together. That which is attributed to fools, and called good nature, is only an inability of observing what is faulty; which turns in marriage into a suspicion of every thing as such,

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from a consciousness of that inability. When a child of a liberal and ingenuous spirit is forced into the arms of a clown or blockhead, it is obliging her to a crime too odious to name. It is, in a degree, the unnatural conjunction of rational and brutal beings. Yet what is there so common as the bestowing an accomplished woman with such disparity? How awful and affecting is the day, when a parent leads his child to the altar, in order to commit her into the hands of a man, and to give her a Lord, who perhaps has no other idea of the prerogatives of a husband, than to make an ill use of them? Should he become a tyrant, instead of a friend and protector; or, if wholly neglecting the gentle and sacred authority with which her father has entrusted him, should he abandon to herself the dear object which he ought to lead, her father only has to answer for all the calamities that may be the consequence of an union in which her heart has been so little consulted. To see a virtuous fair one obliged to swear eternal constancy to one, to whom her father, jealous of a vain prerogative, disposes her hand, at the very time perhaps that her heart vows eternal love to another, is, I conceive, the worst of human allotments, since she must feel, as well for her own disappointment, as for the misery of him whom she so ardently loves. That she is wretched is most certain; but the just feelings of nature emerging from the bottom
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of her father's heart, must tell him he has a daughter, on whom indulgent heaven has bestowed every blessing except a kind father. I would here advise fathers, whom heaven has blessed with dutiful children, to endeavour to make them happy rather than great, and never by their authority to violate those hearts which they have only a right to guide. Must not all the pleasures of marriage be unanimous and inseparable? Do they not flow from real and unaffected loveliness? If so, *let love be without dissimulation.*

An affection raised by assumed appearances, can never support us against the influence of domestic troubles daily reviving, which discolour our lives as rain and impetuous torrents do clear and limpid streams, that refine as they flow along, till they have wrought themselves clear by their unwearied and incessant motion. Those flowing streams, circulating with a never failing current along their winding channels, compose, by their own embraces, no inexpressive emblem of the endearments of friendship. Enamoured as it were with each other, they glide by wealthy towns, and sweep through flowery vales; regardless of the blooming toys which deck the one, and of the noisy crouds which throng the other; and continuing their progress, never interrupt their unwearied course, till they have swept through the most extensive
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climes and regained their native seas. So may we, pleasing and pleased with each other, pass through the busy and the amusing scenes of life.

With such harmonious agreement and indissoluble union, may we pursue the course marked out by Providence, our happiness increasing, and our usefulness enlarging, as we draw nearer the fountain of all good; till the port of mortality puts an end to our voyage, having already anticipated that heaven in each other's love and friendship, which we then go more fully to possess.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N VI.

EPHESIANS v. 33.

*Let every one of you in particular so love his wife,
even as himself; and the wife see that she
reverence her husband.*

THE word wife is the most agreeable and delightful name in nature: If it were not so in itself, all the wiser part of mankind, from the beginning of the world to this day, has consented to an error; if it were not so, man would not here be commanded to love her as himself. Herein it is, that divinity, by a most kind and welcome force obliges us to that, to which humanity does passionately prompt us. Herein it is, that we are by a gentle tie bound to that as Christians, to which we were all before desirous to be bound as men. I cannot help thinking, however, that the restraints of law, which have been laid on marriage, greatly discourage virtuous love. It is said, the marriage act is justified by the example of foreign nations; but so also is arbitrary power, and

and there are few acts which in their nature and spirit tend more to despotism than the marriage act. But omitting to consider it in a political light, I shall view it for a moment, as it effects the morals of the sexes. Let us suppose the case of two young and virtuous persons powerfully struck with each others agreeable qualities, and deeply in love. The consequence of being obliged to postpone a legal union may tend to promote an improper intercourse, (since an intercourse there must be from the influence of love, as well as from the dictates of prudence) by which the maid may be forsaken, and the lover corrupted. Yet I will add that alterations in an act, in which the domestic happiness of every family in the kingdom is interested, should not take place but after the coolest deliberation, and the testimony of long and decisive experience. Villains will avail themselves of a freedom from restraint, to allure the incautious female into matrimony, merely for the sake of her fortune; and surely some precaution must be taken by human laws to prevent that cruel species of robbery. To rob a father of his child, and then to forsake or injure that child, none but a father can feel the agonizing pain that rises on the reflection. Her husband receives her, for the most part, from the hands of those, under whose wings she had till that time been safe and happy; from those, whose goodness he promised to supply,
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and whose indulgence he has sworn to imitate. He takes her from the bosom of parental tenderness, to feed and cherish her in his own, and therefore should *so love her even as himself*, and be more careful to preserve his character and reputation, because her's depends upon it.

Women are generally respected and esteemed in the world according to the merit and character of their husbands, which may be one reason why they are enjoined to reverence them, *and the wife see that she reverence her husband*. How shocking then to set out with fraud, and to proceed with deceit, in this solemn engagement? Let your words be bonds, your oaths oracles, your love sincere, and your thoughts immaculate, in the advances you make towards a young lady of the strictest virtue, and have something that may please her mind in its purest innocence, as well as celebrate her person in its highest beauty. This would instruct a woman to be a good wife, all the while it is wooing her to be a bride. Imagination and reason would go hand in hand in a generous amour. I must confess, I ever thought it the most valuable recommendation of a wife, to be capable of becoming a conversable companion to her husband. I do not consider the ladies as only beautiful figures placed in the world by way of ornament, or as delightful flowers formed merely to variegate and enrich the colouring

colouring of the universe; nor harbour the degrading idea of their being only intended for the procreation and necessary continuation of the human species; but consider them as beings with whom we may form the tenderest of all connexions, which affords the truest pleasures and the fairest prospects that humanity knows; the pleasures which are enjoyed at home, and the prospects which include a family: nor did I ever conceive that the qualifications of a cook-maid, a laundress, or a housekeeper, were the most desirable accomplishments in a partner for life. A woman of improved understanding, and real sense, is more likely to submit to her condition, whatever it may be, than the uneducated and half learned; and such a one will ever be willing to superintend economy, when it becomes her duty, and to take an active part in household management, when the happiness of him she loves, and of herself, depends upon her personal interference. The education of children in the early periods, particularly of daughters, naturally belongs to the mother. Her inclination to improve them, seconded by her ability to take the proper methods, must be attended with the most valuable effects. But little nourishment of mind can be imbibed from a mother, whose ideas hardly ever wandered beyond the limits either of a kitchen or a dressing room.

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If the ladies would sacrifice to the graces, in their conjugal demeanour, as sincerely as they do at their toilets, and labour incessantly and with delight, to enlarge the sphere of their knowledge, and aggrandize their minds with truth, justice, humanity, and genuine religion, and with enlarged views of the Deity, as he is manifested in the natural and moral world, their intellectual acquisitions would enable them to entertain their husbands by every agreeable information, and make them daily not only more fond of them, but infinitely more satisfied with themselves; nor could they enough applaud their good fortune in having their lives varied every hour, and their hearts more glad from every circumstance which they meet with. For mutual love gives an importance to the most indifferent things, and a merit to actions the most insignificant. Whatever is delightful in human life, is to be enjoyed in a greater perfection in the married, than in the single condition. There is something in it that doubles satisfactions, because others partake of them; and lightens afflictions, because others share them. Nature has given all the little arts of soothing and blandishment to the female, that she may cheer and animate her companion, in a constant and assiduous application to the making a provision for his family, and the education of their common children. By a sort of second process, her nature is, as it were, more sublimed, and though she is not formed

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with strength of body to govern, yet she is furnished with attractions to control the heart of man. What is refined in study, and useful in the milder modes of life, suits the more tender health, and those softer graces, that give the highest lustre to the female sex.

Whenever I see a knot of misses busy at their needles, I consider myself as in the school of Virtue, and look upon their occupations with much satisfaction, because I regard them as providing a security against the most dangerous ensnarers of the soul, by enabling themselves to exclude idleness from their solitary moments, and with idleness, her attendant train of passions, fancies, chimeras, fears, sorrows and desires. Let the men unenvied shine in public; it is the women must make their homes delightful.

Public life (though some females have shone in it as stars of the first magnitude) is not certainly the proper walk of the sex. Far other excellencies than those, which grace the statesman, the politician, or the hero, are generally to be expected from them. To lecture with authority, to argue with violence, to dispute with obstinacy, are qualifications purely masculine. It were too much to say, that to be in the right is a male quality; but to feel one's self in the right, or rather to shew that feeling, is not delicately female. Man was born to govern, to guard, and to protect; woman to obey, to please,

please, and to reward. Man sits at the helm, and having the management and direction of affairs, in whatever station, business or profession he is engaged, must expect to meet with various misfortunes and disappointments in his passage through the world; and therefore, as most able, is appointed to perform the journey. The care of providing for his household, of acquiring what is necessary and convenient, falls to the lot of the industrious husband. How then is the good and virtuous wife, the partner of his joys and sorrows, to behave to him in those crosses and vexations he meets with in this great scene of vexation, the world? Is she to reproach his melancholy, to inflame his passion, to imbitter his disquietude? Or is she, on the other hand, to endeavour to calm his sorrows, and sooth his affliction; to consider the wounds of adversity which pain him, as received in her service; the disquietude, which he feels, as endured for her sake? Is she not to give way to the petulency or anger which appears in him, to esteem it not as the natural inmate of his breast, but as an importunate intruding stranger brought thither by misfortunes and disappointments? The greater, therefore, his sorrows are, the greater should be her care to remove them. Her tenderness should increase in proportion to his disquietude; her forbearance to his warmth; her complacency, to his uneasiness. Her smiles are to make amends for the frowns of the world, and her love and kindness to compensate for its hatred and ingratitude.

Man governs by law, woman by persuasion. Her's is a sovereignty founded on complaisance and address, and, in domestic life at least, has been felt and acknowledged in all ages. Mark how she aspires and rises to universal dominion and empire. She never struggles or contradicts, but uniformly accomplishes her designs by submission. Her indulgence of her husband secures her own; and she possesses the blessed art of giving way, by which she is enabled the more effectually to keep her ground. I have often remarked, how women of capacity and elegance have possessed the hearts of their husbands, in a degree which is not common; I mean, where those husbands had any worth or discernment. You will easily imagine, that I suppose the women in question too wise and too excellent to affect superiority; or not to give to their partners all the credit and consequence possible on every occasion. If they place their glory in despotic rule instead of kind attraction, and chuse rather to tyrannize over dastardly slaves under the form of husbands, than to influence those husbands as tender friends; what can we say, but that we pity their husbands much, but them the more. For the idea of a little paultry power assumed without title, and exercised without discretion, to give up the worthiest triumph of their sex, how mean and how miserable! *Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Ascalon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice; lest the daughters of the uncircumcised*

uncircumcised triumph. Alluding to such Solomon observes, *it is better to dwell in a corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.* Depend upon it, such dispositions are always disgusting. Were she that indulges them blooming as the spring, or beautiful as the day, no charms of understanding or of person could compensate in her the want of soft compliance and meek submission. Heaven made her insinuating, but not in order to be cross: it made her feeble, but not to be imperious: it gave her beauty, but not to disfigure it with anger; and imparted to her a sweet voice, but not to be a scold. The female mind as well as form is naturally soft and delicate, more susceptible of pain and pleasure than the mind of man. Her form can boast of finer harmony, though of less strength. In like manner, the sentiments of the softer sex abound in a peculiar tenderness, delicacy and vivacity. If they are not solid, they are refined; if they are not just and serious, they are natural and chearful, more gay and lively than men. Nature has given them beauty of external form, superior to that of the men. The power which this gives them over our hearts, they well know, and they need no instructor how to exercise it. But if we suffer what should be only a soft alteration, to grow into an absolute dominion, and those qualities which were intended to enhance our pleasure and polish our manners, to assume an arbitrary power over our reason,

reason, and to control our mental faculties, we do not make use of those powers which heaven gives us; and if evil follows, whether in a moral or in a natural sense, we are the authors of it.

In all concessions a man should consider whether the present he makes, flows from his own love, or the importunity of his beloved: if from the latter, he is her slave; (if from the former, her friend) and he is to see the hour in which he is to be reproached by her for this very complaisance to her. There is something so moving in the very image of weeping beauty, that it were to be wished those eloquent drops were no more lavished on trifles, or employed as servants to their waywardness; but reserved for useful occasions in life, to adorn generous pity, true penitence, or real sorrow.

I would humbly propose to the ladies, for their own ease and happiness, to be good humoured, to be mild to their domestics; nay, to be complaisant even to their husbands; because good humour, mildness and complaisance are good for their faces. For whenever they say or do a good humoured thing, they add a new beauty to their countenance; and by giving some attention to the affairs of their families, and now and then living regularly, keep off somewhat longer than otherwise the wrinkles of age.

It is very unfortunate, that within that circle
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where all the virtues of temper find an ample range, too many think themselves at liberty to be rude and quarrelsome, and frequently exercise the worst turns of their temper, where they ought to exert the best. I see one advantage to be reaped from the company of those who live in the hourly repetition of sharp answers, eager upbraidings, and distracting reproaches; and that is, to form ourselves for the world by patience at home; and I would have, if possible, a wise man be contented with his lot, even with a shrew; for though he cannot make her better, he may make himself better by her means; he may be beholden to her, that he bears so well the temper of others; but he must be grieved when he sees her fretting and bleeding inwardly from trivial motives; when he beholds the face of an angel agitated and discomposed by the heart of a fury.

I cannot consider, without a secret indignation, that all those affections of the mind, which should be consecrated to their children, husbands, and parents, in all the domestic innocent endearments of life, are vilely prostituted and thrown away. Was the understanding, that divine part in our composition, given for such an use? Is it thus that we improve the greatest talent human nature is endowed with? What would a superior being think, were he shewn this intellectual faculty in a female fury, and at the same time told that it was by this she was distinguished from brutes, and allied to angels;

angels ; to whom man looks up as a being of the sweetest, loveliest, and most celestial order, whose beautiful smile communicates the happiness she feels to all around her, and like a smooth stream, reflects every object in its just proportion, and fairest colours ; while the angry countenance, like troubled water, renders back the images of things distorted and broken, and communicates to all that disordered motion which arises solely from its own agitation ?

This species of good humour, which is the result of understanding, virtue, and gratitude, has a double claim to female attention, and ought to be uniform in its appearance, and consistent in its manners. It should not, like an April day, lower and shine almost in the same moment ; nor, like the flaming heats of July, should the brightness of the meridian sun foretel the approaching thunder. There is a yet higher and stronger motive for avoiding rage, jealousy, or any other ungente passion, which deforms the fairest face, as much as it degrades the mind. If she presumes to call herself a Christian, shall the disciple of a suffering Saviour dare to resent, with furious outrage the real or imaginary injuries she may receive ? or can she kneel before the throne of mercy, and supplicate the God of peace and good will to man, for pardon and protection, while her heart is agitated with a spirit of malice and revenge towards a fellow creature, frail as her wretched self ? Let us suppose what, I think, the worst

worst of all situations, an amiable young woman possessing the tenderest affection for her husband, while he, from the natural depravity and inconstancy of his nature, has withdrawn his love from her, and perhaps bestowed it on some unworthy object, to whom he devotes his time and fortune. In such a state of wretchedness, what line shall our neglected wife pursue? The first step that I would recommend to her, is that of entering into a serious and impartial examination of her own conduct. If she cannot discover any fault in her manners, that might have given offence, or created disgust, let her steadily pursue the same behaviour she has hitherto practised; for if that be totally free from error, it is impossible that any alteration can give additional efficacy to it. For to resent or to retaliate, neither her duty nor her religion will permit; nor is there any instance to be met with, where female violence has ever conquered male obstinacy; or where dissipation or coquetry, though they have alarmed the pride, ever reclaimed the alienated affections of a husband. I can, by no means, advise her to turn a fashionable wife, with respect to the conjugal bed. The modishness of the crime does not diminish it. I would recommend the contrary behaviour, which deserves all her heart and application in the attempt. And she has this for her encouragement, that her endeavours will be always pleasing, and she will find the affec-

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tions of her husband rising towards her in proportion to her endeavours to please him.

Solomon, in his description of a virtuous woman, has furnished us with the finest idea that ever was given, *she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness.* And surely there exists not a being, under the form of a husband, who could reject such an address with scorn or violence. Recollection may furnish to my fair readers many instances, where patient sufferings have been rewarded with returning love. But never yet was love recalled by lamentations or upbraidings. The first may sometimes create pity, but oftener begets contempt; and the latter never did, nor can produce any passion, but instant rage, or cool determined hate. It is wonderful to observe, how easily man gets into a habit of being the least agreeable, where he is obliged to be most so; because he has a woman of merit who is obliged to receive him kindly; who pretends to no succour, and hopes for no relief, but from him; and yet he never reflects, that to come home only to sleep off an intemperance, and spend all the time he is there, as if it were a punishment, cannot but give anguish. Their hours together are either painful or insipid; the minutes she has to herself in his absence are not sufficient to give vent at her eyes to the grief and torment of his last conversation. The
suspected

suspected wife, if she suffers wrongfully in her husband's opinion of her, and is upbraided falsely, is often put in mind of an ill thing, that she would not otherwise perhaps have thought of; which fills her imagination with such an unlucky idea as in time grows familiar, executes desire, and loses all the shame and horror which might at first attend it; and sometimes makes her resolve to give him reasons for his suspicions, and to enjoy the pleasures of the crime, since she must undergo the ignominy. Such probably were the considerations that directed the wise man in his advice to husbands, *be not jealous over the wife of thy bosom, and teach her not an evil lesson against thyself.*

It will require much pains, but they are pleasing ones, to keep the ever turning wheel of sublunary bliss, from rolling down the rugged precipice, where jealousy, disgust and grief mark the horrid road. But I have not engaged to prevent inconstancy, I have only undertaken to describe it. Whatever seeming uneasinesses little absences may give, they are some of the best preservatives of love and desire. But love thrives best in places the least frequented, where it is seldomest exposed to the wanton gaze of the wandering eye, or the cruel hand of the rude or sly invader. Virtuous love, like true devotion, flies from noise, seeks retreat, and delights to indulge itself unobserved by all but the
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object of its veneration. They who have chosen each other out of the whole species, with a design to each other's mutual comfort and entertainment; who have a rising family to introduce into the world, consider the mutual interest in which they are engaged, with all the motives which ought to incite their tenderness and compassion towards those, who have their dependence upon them, and cast a look upon each other the most tender and affectionate you ever beheld. The man can say, if I am unacceptable to all the world besides, there is one whom I sincerely love, that will receive me with joy and transport, and think herself obliged to double her kindness and caresses of me, from the gloom with which she sees me overcast. What returns of love are due to her, whose tenderness thus relieves her husband's cares, whose affection softens his distress, and whose good humour and complacency lighten and subdue his afflictions. The duties which are powerfully called forth by this endearing relation, are of that tender kind which inspire goodness and humanity. He who beholds a woman whom he loves, shewing a sweet solicitude to please him by every decent, gentle, unaffected attraction, is soothed, is subdued, and yields himself her willing captive. There is an influence, there is an empire, which belongs to the fair sex, and which I wish them ever to possess: I mean that which has the heart for its object, and

and is secured by meekness and modesty, by soft attraction and virtuous love. The accomplished wife makes it her business to serve, and her pleasure to oblige her husband; she is humble and modest from reason and conviction; submissive from choice, and obedient from inclination. It is the wife's interest as well as duty, to be in subjection to her husband; because she, who most easily complies with his will, is for the most part indulged in her own; and she hath the most frequent opportunities to command, who is most ready and most willing to obey. And that she may never feel herself under the dominion of a master, let her husband impose on her no other commands but such as may render her subjection the more agreeable, and his authority the more lasting. Let the end proposed in all their disputes be truth, and not victory; and the desire of both to convince, and not to conquer; *and let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

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